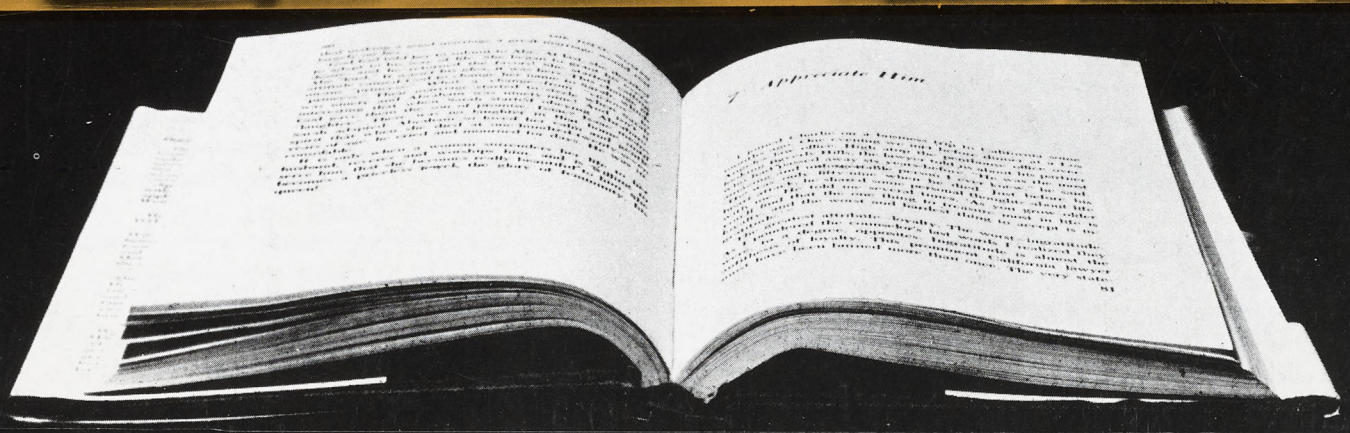
IN UNITY

January 76

Samaritan Bible School: Its Past, Present and Potential



News Magazine of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

Hartford or Boston? an Opinion

by Rev. Elder James E. Sandmire

One year ago a group of prominent theologians met in Hartford and issued a manifesto expressing alarm at the current state of Chirstian theology. They contended church thinkers, and by extension, much of the church, had become so preoccupied with social problems, sociological concerns, political action, and modern theological stances that the spiritual values of a God-centered, individual theology of salvation had been lost.

This month another group of equally prominent theologians, meeting in Boston, including some of the better known process theologians and social activists, answered the Hartford group with a ringing declaration that the Gospel validates itself only as it is used to solve the problems of poverty, prejudice, and war in the real world.

In MCC there has been an increasing division among clergy and laity over similar questions. Some preach about a return to spiritual values and decry our preoccupation with social questions. Others push hard to swing the Fellowship to actively support ethnic concerns, gay liberation, and other controversial social action questions.

The battle over conservative and liberal theology is aired at more than one congregational or ministerial meeting.

In this brief article I would like to suggest some considerations for resolving this controversy which is fast becoming one of the principal dangers to our Fellowship unity.

First, Hegel recognized opposing positions can yield a synthesis which combines the value of both views and remolds them into a new unity. I believe we, too, must develop a Fellowship position that unites these various positions into a unique and new approach to taking the Gospel into the world.

If we can only free ourselves from our slavish obeissance to the past — to the denominational roots from which we came — we can begin to look anew at the Gospel Jesus preached.

Second, the Gospel of Jesus evaluated the personal spirituality the Pharisees were striving for in terms of the practical effect of that striving on the interpersonal relations of one to another. A spirituality that did not recognize the hurts and needs of another was hypocrisy. On the other hand, those who had sufficient material goods were required to give them up if they were to find the spirituality they sought.

Third, the ecology of spirituality seems to demand not just a combining of spirituality and materiality. It speaks to a new concept: that spirituality comes only when all have shared their materiality without concern for personal comfort. It was no accident that the early church held all things in common. The corroding influence of material things begins with personal ownership. And yet, the need for the sustaining goods of food and shelter and the need for the intellectual and ethical goods of what we call culture must be provided before the soul can soar into the spirituality that denies the worldly.

I would urge some of us to be less sure that spirituality is not related to the social questions of our day. And I would urge others to be less sure that social activism is the touchstone of religiosity.

Perhaps, the secret to a new "spirituality of the world" lies in preaching a spirituality that finds its ultimate value in our individual success in relieving the social barriers that prevent all of us from finding true peace. For some that means agitating to see that more is shared and less is kept. For others it means seeing that more of what we have, physical and spiritual, is given gladly to the whole community.

And then only can spirituality and materiality contribute equally to our search for God. ■

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Special Mention: Many after hours and all night sessions on the part of two people made both the December and January issue possible. Rev. Richard Vincent did all the typesetting on the Fellowship's new electronic composer. Rev. Larry Bernier did all the design and layout work.

INSIDE IN UNITY

On the January 4th weekend, the Reverends Tom Taylor, Larry Bernier, Jay Deacon and I had a long talk about the work of the Publications Department.

Tom, who served as editor of IN UNITY for two years 1973-1975, now an editorial advisor to IN UNITY, met in Los Angeles with Larry and me. Larry is the newly appointed Associate Editor of IN UNITY whose artistic cover and general layout design for the December issue has received many favorable comments.

We conferred by long distance telephone with the Reverend Jay Deacon, Pastor of MCC Hartford, who has been named to the position of editor of the Fellowship theological and reflective "opinion" journal, THE GAY CHRISTIAN.

Jay announced that THE GAY CHRISTIAN, the first in more than a year, and the first since his being named editor, will be puslished in February.

The conference call departmental meeting discussed areas of cooperation in the production of IN UNITY and THE GAY CHRISTIAN.

Since the Fellowship has acquired an IBM Electronic Composer, the Department now has the capacity to typeset, design, and layout its own publications. This includes the Fellowship periodicals *Cellmate*, IN UNITY, and THE GAY CHRISTIAN, as well as publications of the Universal Fellowship press, such as books, pamphlets, and brochures.

A simultaneous announcement of new developments in the Department will be made in February in IN UNITY and in THE GAY CHRISTIAN.

Reflective or theological "opinion" manuscripts for THE GAY CHRISTIAN should be submitted to the Editor, Reverend Jay Deacon, 11 Amity Street, Hartford, CT 06106.

We all came away from the meeting feeling that God had great work for the Publications Department. We had a good feeling that more and more people are becoming conscious of evangelistic uses of our UFMCC publications as well as their necessity for our communication and growth in the Lord in unity.

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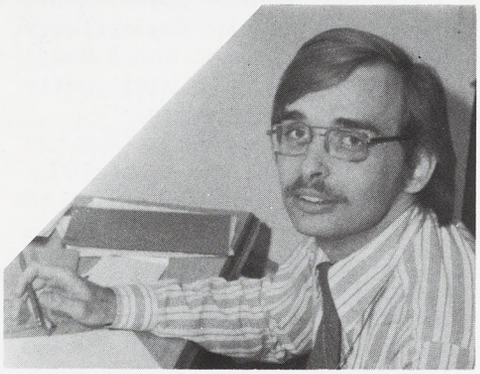
A Personal Viewpoint



by Reverend Jeffrey Pulling

If anyone had told me a year ago that I would now be working for Samaritan Bible School or even be a supporter of the school, I would have laughed in their face. This is because I hail from the "intellectually snobby" Northeast, and I had no use for Samaritan, which I regarded as "rinky-dink" and theologically weak. After moving to Los Angeles this past Summer, however, I learned different. Many people have worked hard to make Samaritan a good school and to provide sound training for students preparing for their ministry. Samaritan is improving every year.

I have decided to focus my ministry on the school because I see potential for it and I want to see it grow as a school the Fellowship can be proud of and which provides trained clergy and lay leaders for our churches. MCC needs a good school, and we have the beginnings of one in Samaritan Bible School.

The quality of courses offered at Samaritan is much higher than I thought, and they are being gradually raised as the admission standards are raised so that eventually every course will function on the college level. The curriculum is in the process of being revised. We are presently in the third year of a three-year cycle, and thus we are going to start a new cycle next year. Some of the proposals for the new curriculum include more choice and flexibility in required courses, independent study, and basic courses which will be prerequisites to higher level courses.

I am also impressed with the faculty of Samaritan Bible School. As is evidenced in the article on faculty members in this issue of IN UNITY, we have a diverse and well-trained faculty. Some members of the faculty have taught professionally. There is a good ecumenical balance among the seven instructors: three former Roman Catholics, two former mainline Protestants, and two from other groups. It is good to have such a balance of church background and theological tradition in a school that serves an ecumenical fellowship like MCC. Samaritan Bible School does not promote one particular theological stance. There are some people who charge that Samaritan is too conservative; others say it is too liberal. Personally I think we are achieving some kind of balance among all the traditions that make up MCC.

For instance, in the Prophets course I am now teaching, the text that I use is a Roman Catholic commentary series that has a good balance between Biblical authority and good, sound scholarship. I steered clear of conservative Protestant books that emphasized Biblical authority and whose scholarship was lousy or nonexistent, and I avoided liberal Protestant books that were excellent in their scholarship but had no sense of Biblical authority. We do not use Catholic resources for many of our courses, but it was appropriate here.

I personally have two goals for the school, and I think I can safely say that the other trustees agree on these. I would like Samaritan to be a Fellowship-oriented school and a student-oriented school. I hope that in the future Samaritan can truly be a school that serves the whole Fellowship, and not just Southern California. We already have students from all over the country. We even have two applicants for next year from the "intellectually snobby" Northeast. Hopefully, one day we will have the financial resources to assist foreign students to come to our school. We realize that if we are to attract qualified students to our school from all over the United States and from around the world, we must provide a good education for them when they get to Los Angeles. The upgrading of courses, faculty, and services goes hand in hand with the upgrading of students.

One way in which we are already serving the whole Fellowship is through our correspondence courses. This is an area the trustees are concentrating on, and many more courses are planned. These correspondence courses can be used by exhorters in their preparation for professional ministry, by credentialed clergy in their continuing education, and by laypeople who are interested in broadening their knowledge and developing their skills for their own ministry and Christian life.

The second goal I have for Samaritan Bible School is that it become more student-oriented. The school, after all, exists for the students; to inspire and equip them for service in MCC. Because Samaritan is a part-time, evening school, the students have had little sense of being a student body or school community. To encourage

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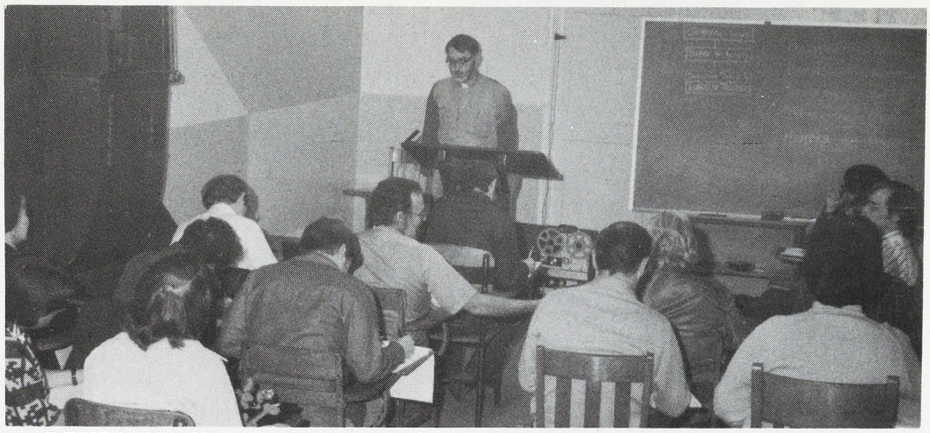

REVEREND VINCENT instructs class in UFMCC structure and government
[Photo credits: This photo, and the photos on pages 4 and 6 by Gordon Fisher]

Samaritan Bible School: Almost Six Years Old and Still Growing

Samaritan Bible School, formerly Samaritan Bible Seminary, was begun for the purpose of training men and women for the Christian ministry. Now in its sixth year of operation, SBS has helped to prepare many, many men and women for all aspects of Christian ministry and service, lay and professional. In addition, many students have enrolled in courses just to enlighten themselves and to expand their knowledge of the Bible, theology, etc. Only a few have made it through Samaritan's rigorous three-year, 27-course program, but many have better prepared themselves to minister and serve in Metropolitan Community Churches.

The school began as a dream of Reverend Richard Ploen and Reverend Troy Perry. They saw the need for qualified workers around the world and they envisioned a school or seminary to meet that need. They planned an inexpensive evening school so that students who had to work to support themselves could still attend classes. Reverend John Hose wrote a paper on such a school for his Master's degree. Some of his suggestions for curriculum were incorporated into the original course of study.

Classes began in September of 1970, with Reverend Ploen and Reverend Hose as the first instructors. Two large rooms in the parsonage of the Metropolitan Community Church-Los Angeles were allocated as classrooms. Reverend Ploen had an office located adjacent to the classrooms as part of his living quarters in the building. Interested persons helped the school start operations by donating desk-chairs, a chalkboard, and a lecturn.

Since that time numerous MCC clergy and laypersons, as well as clergy of other denominations, have worked to make Samaritan Bible School a functioning school every year. All teachers, trustees, and administrators have volunteered their time. To date, the only paid position in the school is that of Dean and that is only a token salary. Despite this, many excellent courses have been offered, curriculums have been developed and used, and an ever-expanding theological library has been gathered. The library, now consisting of over 4000 volumes, is being converted to the Library of Congress cataloging system so that students and faculty might make better use of the resources available in this collection.

Samaritan Bible School has usually been located with MCC in Los Angeles in the various places occupied by that church. Since 1974 the school's classroom, library, and offices have been housed in the present home of MCC Los Angeles on South Hill Street in downtown Los Angeles. The local church has asked the school to move out of the building because the church now needs the space the school is occupying. Consequently, the SBS trustees are looking for a new home for the school and they are exploring various alternatives. This is an important step for Samaritan: to have its own facility and thus to develop its own identity. Samaritan has grown up in the "womb" of the "Mother Church" and now it is time for the school to start walking on its own. This will be a financially uncertain move for the school because up to the present the Universal Fellowship has paid the Los Angeles church only minimal rent for school space and the school has no building fund. Nevertheless, it is an important step in the growth of SBS toward becoming an independent, viable, and accredited school that serves the whole Fellowship.

THEY SAW THE NEED FOR QUALIFIED WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD AND THEY ENVISIONED A SCHOOL OR SEMINARY TO MEET THE NEED

SBS operates on a three quarters per year system offering four evening classes every quarter. Three of these classes are curriculum courses (those required for graduation) and the fourth is an optional or elective course. These Fall, Winter and Spring quarters are occasionally supplemented by a Summer quarter of electives. Twenty-seven courses (or 54 credit units) are necessary for graduation, as well as a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0. Requirements for admission of new students to the school include graduation from high school and

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New Dean Heads Samaritan Bible School Faculty

The new Dean of Samaritan Bible School is Ms. Karen Wheeler. The Board of Elders appointed Ms. Wheeler to fill the position recently held by the Reverend Donald Pederson, now District Coordinator of the Southwest District. As Dean, Ms. Wheeler heads the seven-member faculty and is in charge of instruction, curriculum, and all academic concerns.

Ms. Wheeler has been involved with SBS since 1971, first as a student and then as a faculty member beginning in 1973. She was appointed to the Board of Trustees in 1974. Her teaching specialty at SBS has been speech, sermon preparation, and preaching.

The 27-year-old Ms. Wheeler grew up in Lakewood, Ohio, where she graduated from high school in 1965. She attended Ohio State University and received from that school a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communications in 1969. While at Ohio State, she was a dorm government officer and a member of the Phi Mu social sorority, the debate team, and the campus Christian Science group.

Following her graduation, Ms. Wheeler came to California and taught at the California State University at Fullerton. She completed the work on her Master of Arts there in 1971. She has been employed as an insurance underwriter for the past year and a half.

In 1971 Ms. Wheeler started to attend the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles.. She has served as a monitor in the Crisis Intervention Center, a member of the woman's group, an Exhorter, director of publications, and first editor of *New Life*, the predecessor of the present church newsletter, *Good News*.

The other six faculty members of Samaritan Bible School include the Reverend Richard Ploen, the Reverend Richard Vincent, the Reverend James Sandmire, Ms. Jerri Slifer, the Reverend Jeffrey Pulling, and the Reverend Richard Mickley.

The Reverend Richard Ploen has been active in MCC since its inception in Los Angeles in 1968, and he has also worked with Samaritan Bible School since it was organized in 1970. Reverend Ploen is a native Californian, born and raised in the Los Angeles area.

He began his preparation for the Christian ministry at San Francisco Theological Seminary and received a Master of Divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He later received a Master's degree in Christian Education from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia.

Reverend Ploen served in the mission field in Sudan, Africa, under the sponsorship of the United Presbyterian Church. He was a minister of Christian Education in United Presbyterian churches in Pittsburgh, PA, and Joliet, IL. Upon returning to California he was employed by a Christian college in the Los Angeles area.

When Reverend Ploen became involved with the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles, he was named to the Board of Directors and was church clerk for three years. He was also chairperson for the Christian Education Committee.

Reverend Ploen was one of the original people who organized Samaritan Bible School. He served as first dean of the school and is still on the Board of Trustees.

Named to the first Board of Elders of the Universal Fellowship, Reverend Ploen was re-elected in 1973 and served faithfully until his resignation from that board in 1974.

The Reverend James Sandmire, presently the pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles, also serves as an Elder of the Universal Fellowship. He was raised in Oklahoma in a devout Mormon family. During his high school and college years he was active in church affairs, school government, music, drama and swimming. He attended Harvard University (Cambridge, MA), from which he received a Bachelor's degree in 1952.

As is expected of all young Mormons, Reverend Sandmire gave two years to full time ministry. He then returned to school, first to Harvard Business School and then to the University of California at Berkeley where he received a graduate degree in behavioral sciences. He continued to be very active in the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) and held many positions in his local congregation.

He helped to found two successful businesses in educational and management consulting fields, and was on the board of directors of an educational foundation and three companies. He gave lectures to industry and government on management problems. Because of his homosexuality and growing theological differences, he left the Mormon Church.

Reverend Sandmire attended a special MCC service in San Francisco in 1970 and has been active in MCC ever since. He helped to organize the East Bay MCC (Oakland, CA) and served as its first pastor. Called to the San Francisco church in 1971, he served as its pastor until the Spring of 1975 when he became the pastor of the Los Angeles MCC. He served as the first District Coordinator of the Northwest District.

Elected to the Board of Elders

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SAMARITAN BIBLE SCHOOL students in Rev. Vincent's class on church polity

CHIRHO: A NEW CONCEPT

by Rev. Joan Johnson

Editor's Foreword: Reverend Joan Johnson, Chairperson of the UFMCC Commission on Innovative Ministries, is founder of the ChiRho organization in Los Angeles and is author of the ChiRho Concept.

Joan is also Director of the Fellowship National Alcoholism Ministry, and is author of Alcoholics Together, *a booklet about the national self-help program for gay alcoholics.*

In founding ChiRho, Joan began employing some of the same ideas of self-help that have made Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) so successful.

In this article she gives an overview of the ChiRho concept and a preview of her forthcoming booklet, the ChiRho Concept.

Webster's Dictionary describes the word "handicap" as a "disadvantage that makes achievement unusually difficult."

Chi Rho are the two letters which are the beginning of the name of Christ in Greek. They also form an acronym which stands for Christian Help and Interest in Rehabilitation of Handicapped and Others. The ChiRho concept provides many ways to involve not only the handicapped but those interested in handicapped people and, in our case, sometimes the entire local church congregation.

For instance, our first outreach was to sponsor a seeing eye dog for International Guiding Eyes. To fund this, we began collecting aluminum. The entire congregation joined in the effort. With proceeds from this and some donations, we were able to sponsor two seeing eye dogs.

People usually tend to think only in terms of the *physically* handicapped. There are, however, many types of handicaps, both physical and emotional, visible and invisible. For example, we have among our members people who have the following handicaps: blindness, deafness, and alcoholism. We have one brother who speaks through a voice box as a result of throat cancer and another who has suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and is paralyzed on the left side. Another is a person with a colestomy. This would be an example of an invisible handicap.

We believe in setting up "rap" sessions for discussion of the problems people have and for formulating programs to help others. The group sets their own goals, formulates their own program, then follows through in carrying them out.

Too often our handicapped ministries try to help a handicapped person in such a way that it forces a dependancy on them. This is not helpful. It is preferable to try to help people help themselves. We have three ways to carry this message: 1) To help people consider their disability as an inconvenience; 2) To make an emotionally handicapped person aware of their emotional problem; and 3) To help people get outside of themselves by helping others. This in essence is what the ChiRho Concept is all about.

Too many people in the ministry have not yet conquered their own fears of physically crippled people, emotionally distrubed people, or even death. Fear has no place in handicapped ministry. On the other hand, too often we replace fear with sympathy. Yet sympathy is one thing a handicapped person does not need. One thing, however, that is an absolute necessity in handicapped ministry is patience, a virtue much in need, but short in supply.

In Los Angeles, we had "ChiRho cards" made for our people. They are a business type card, with the name and address of the church and a blank space for each person to write their name. These cards have been an effective witnessing tool for the handicapped.

We have seen the completion of several realistic goals and

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CHIRHO members and friends enjoy Christmas Party together

San Jose MCC Accepted In Council Of Churches

In a bold banner headline across the top of page one of the 100 page 125 year old San Jose *Mercury*, citizens of San Jose learned on December 11th that MCC San Jose had been okayed as a member of the Santa Clara County Council of Churches by a 35-14 vote in a secret ballot.

MCC Pastor William Chapman found out the same way. When he walked into a downtown pastor's meeting early that morning, he was greeted and congratulated and shown the 1½ inch high headlines spanning the full width of the city's morning newspaper, "Gay San Jose Church OK'd."

MCC had been attending meetings of the Council of Churches for the past eight months with a voice but no vote. After committee meetings, stalls, and hearings and more delays, the vote was finally set for the early December meeting.

There had been hot debate. Many of the twenty-five member Churches had held hearings in their local churches. Some of them had asked Pastor Chapman to come and discuss the matter. Some of the churches actively campaigned for the admission of MCC.

When MCC was first invited to attend meetings, there was great fear that MCC might attempt to "proseletize."

This didn't happen. Before long, however, there were *requests* from all sides for education about MCC, about homosexuality, and about the gay Christian life style.

Main opposition to MCC's acceptance was led by the Reverend Aahmes Overton, pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church of San Jose.

Subsequently, two churches withdrew from membership in the Council: West Valley Presbyterian and Blossom Baptist Church.

Reverend Arthur Casady, Chairperson of the membership committee, summed up the statement for MCC as follows, as quoted in the *Mercury*, "When they agreed to subscribe to the Council's statement of faith and agreed to commit themselves to work for the Council, we were left with little choice.

"We could not make a moral choice of whether or not homosexuality was evil or wicked, or right or just.

"The evidence seems to indicate that homosexuality is a biological condition, not a moral decision. While neither condemning nor condoning that lifestyle — and this is really the basic issue — we could not accept the precept that gays are unchristian.

"WE COULD NOT MAKE A MORAL CHOICE OF WHETHER OR NOT HOMOSEXUALITY WAS EVIL OR WICKED, OR RIGHT OR JUST."

"Besides, the actual condemnations of the Bible are so different from the attitude of those people we talked to in the Metropolitan Community Church, that the relevance became lost."

Reverend Chapman told IN UNITY, in a jubilant statement later in the day, "Certainly I think this is a benefit for the people of the community of San Jose. We are constantly being asked by pastors of the other churches to counsel persons in their congregations especially in matters dealing with homosexual orientation. Even though we are not a gay church, we do openly profess that our primary outreach is to persons of homosexual preference. And our expertise in that area is recognized. Now, we have been recognized as an equal member church ministering to the Christian Community of San Jose."

MCC made the headlines a couple of more times after that. Reverend Chapman was invited to appear on TV. A lot of letters of support have come in from the

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Christian Loving

by Rev. Felix Donnelly

The ability to love is one of the most spiritual features of human beings. Taking the biblical concept of God as identified with love, "God is love," then human beings can become most God-like in their loving.

The obligation of the Christian is love of God and love of one's fellow human beings. The order, though, is usually that people come to love God through loving people. How can we love God whom we do not see if we do not love our brothers and sisters whom we do see?

For the homosexual, love is surrounded by many taboos, social pressures and difficulties. No matter how much the homosexual might like to deny it, it is not easy for the homosexual to maintain a healthy, stable and fruitful relationship. There are so many obvious things hindering this. This, of course, does not mean to say it's impossible. There are numerous examples of homosexuals who have been able to live in such a love relationship. The very pressures the homosexual is under, however, do present a special challenge to love fully and completely.

It is essential to any person's development that they have the opportunity to love and love fully. To deprive a person of this is to deprive one of something essential to their growth as a person and as a Christian.

The Christian homosexual has special reasons to believe in his or her capacity to love deeply and fully. This love must be with

LOVING CALLS FOR CONSIDERABLE EFFORT AND IN PARTICULAR, SELF-AWARENESS.

regard to the needs, conditions, and vulnerability of the other person. It does not allow for using people, as our society so often does, as sex objects. It could be that the homosexual is also victim of the publicity of our day in that, in seeking relationships, the sexual use of the person becomes paramount. Falling into this is a serious obstacle to deep interpersonal relationships.

The petty jealousies and spitefulness that can enter into human relationships need to be watched. They are unchristian and have no place in really concerned relating. We generate such attitudes, in particular, by our gossip, passing on pettyness, half truths, or even truths about others which hurt people or damage people and relationships.

Loving is not easy, whether it is of God or other people. Loving calls for considerable effort and, in particular, self-awareness. So often, the things we attribute to others, in terms of weaknesses and failures and inadequacies, are very much a reflection of what is within ourselves. To come to terms with these aspects can make us capable, with God's help, of a truly Christian love that is more concerned for the one loved than for oneself.

The homosexual Christian can find a closer relationship with God by bringing to their relationships the selfless qualities of truly Christian love. ■

(From *Outreach* , MCC Auckland, New Zealand, November 1975)

ILLIAMO: Prognosis Excellent

"Baby Illiamo born with four teeth, now has twenty-five and cutting more! Born Keokuk, Iowa, September 4, 1975. Taken home to Quincy, Illinois, November 1, 1975. Health, happy, gaining weight. Prognosis: Excellent."

Keokuk, Iowa, and Quincy, Illinois, and Hannibal, Missouri, are the proud parents.

Being at the meeting point of three states and on the border line of two MCC districts, born in one district and "brought home" to another, the MCC Illiamo Study Group is getting a lot of attention from many sources. Reverend Elder Carol Cureton has "never been too busy to give of her time to MCC Illiamo's concerns. District Coordinators Reverend Charlie Arehart and Reverend Beau McDaniels have helped in many ways. At the request of Reverends Cureton, Arehart and McDaniels, Reverend Ken Martin, Pastor of Good Shepherd Parish MCC in Chicago, went to Quincy and "poured out his concern. He took time to visit almost every person present. Reverend Martin's organizational skills gave us the direction we needed."

The young congregation has its new home in Quincy at least partly because of the generosity of Deane and Robert who found the site in the former Knights of Columbus Hall, paid the first month's rent, and bought all the paint, brushes and rollers which were used by members of the congregation to provide the attractive meeting place pictured on this page. Eight month's rent have been pledged by various individuals so that the rent money will not have to be taken from the weekly offerings.

They have been promised regular MCC communion services from MCC ministers in St. Louis and Chicago.

Reid Christensen and Donn Horning from Illinois attended the recent Mid-Central District Conference in Des Moines, at which MCC Illiamo "received more than its share of attention, love and prayer commitments from every minister and Elders Perry, Smith and Cureton who were in attendance, as well as from many MCC brothers and sisters.

"Their prayers will be for our spiritual growth and unity through God and our Lord Jesus Christ. We are grateful for all those prayers and hope fervently God will give us a church from which we may seek God's will in our lives and do God's work."

The Study Group has already formed ten groups of workers to

make them a vital and viable worshipping community, witnessing community, and working community. "Our goal is to make the Christian church relevant to both gay and straight people. When we all learn to accept one another without judging and with Christian love, all will come that much closer to the example set for us by Jesus Christ."

Yes, there is an MCC in New York, London, Toronto and Sydney. And in case anybody asks, it can now be told: there's one for Keokuk, too. ■

(Information for this article is obtained from throughout Volume 1, Number 1, the December 1975 issue of *The Lamplighter*, official publication of the MCC Illiamo Study Group.)

L.A. Women Experience Spiritual Retreat

by Rev. Joan Johnson

Spirituality, serenity, love and a feeling of togetherness was evident in the retreat sponsored by the Christian Women's Association of MCC Los Angeles on the weekend of December 6th. Some 31 women converged on a mountain cabin at Lake Arrowhead for a spiritual retreat. The three level cabin had sleeping accommodations for all, even though a number of the women utilized sleeping bags.

The weather was beautiful with warm balmy days and nights cold enough for a fire in the huge fireplace, enough snow on the ground for a snowball fight, or building a snowperson. In searching for wood for the fireplace, we found two pieces that had been nailed together to form a cross. This rough hewn cross was placed over the fireplace and became the focal point of our services.

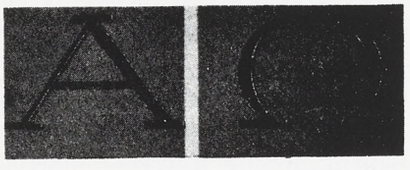
We were served a good hot meal Friday night when we arrived. Then about 9 p.m. we had an hour of devotions.

Saturday there were three workshops. The first two were on "Value Clarifications" and "How to Gain Spiritual Fitness for God's Olympic Team." In the evening the third workshop on "Alcoholism" was presented in the form of an AT meeting, with several of the women who belong to AT participating.

Saturday evening we had a praise and prayer service with a brief message presented by Reverend Val Valrejean. The spirit was evident in all and there were many testimonies to the glory of the Lord.

Saturday evening, after our worship service, we formed a choir which we aptly named the Arrowhead Family. We sang until about two in the morning and worked at trying to perfect a couple of songs. Happily, we were allowed to present these songs at the Sunday night service at MCC Los Angeles. We brought the house down. It was a true expression of the love that had dominated the entire weekend.

IT SEEMS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE, BUT THERE WAS NOT ONE CROSS WORD OR CRITICISM DURING THE ENTIRE WEEKEND



Sunday morning we had an early breakfast, went hiking, or just loafed until 10 a.m. when we had our Sunday morning service. This was held in the cabin with singing, scripture reading, pastoral prayer, and a sermon by Reverend Valrejean. After this part of the service we moved outside to the balcony for Communion service. What a glorious event ... birds singing, the warm sun, squirrels scolding! After the consecration, each woman in turn gave Communion to the person next to her. There was an abundance of tears, joyful hugging, and genuine feelings of love.

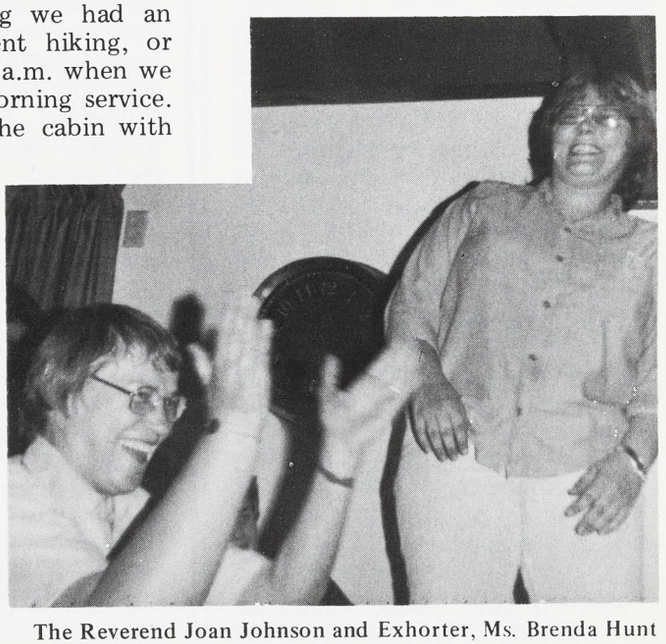
At noon we were served hamburgers and then very reluctantly started to clean up, pack up, and begin the way home.

Exhorter Brenda Hunt is to be commended on putting this retreat together. Char-Lou Castle and Jan Pratt prepared and planned all the meals, which were delicious.

It seems almost impossible, but there was not one cross word or criticism during the entire weekend. Thirty-one women returned spiritually refreshed and uplifted.

The women in the Los Angeles Christian Women's Association are now looking forward to a Spring retreat which will be held on the Colorado River. ■

Retreat participants hear Reverend Valrejean preach the word



The Reverend Joan Johnson and Exhorter, Ms. Brenda Hunt

Homosexual Catholics: A Primer for Discussion

A REVIEW

(Published by DIGNITY, 755 Boylston St., Room 514, Boston, MA 02116)

The National Office of Dignity has published a work which we feel will be a valuable contribution to the on-going task of education about homosexuality. Dignity is organized to unite all gay Catholics, to develop leadership and to be an instrument through which the gay Catholic may be heard by the church and society.

The *PRIMER* is the product of the collaboration of three DIGNITY chaplains who have engaged in gay ministry within the Catholic community for several years. The authors are Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND, Ph.D.; Father Robert Nugent, MSLS; and Father Thomas Oddo, CSC, Ph.D.(Cand.). The booklet is the result of their work and experiences, and we feel it will speak forcefully to the needs of many individuals and groups in the gay community, as well as to other people open to learning about the homophile movement.

The booklet is set attractively in 9 point type. It has twenty-two pages (8½ by 5½). The donation to cover costs and handling is $1.50.

Catholic homosexuals are beginning to speak out in asking the church to re-examine the traditional teaching on homosexuality, even though Archbishop Joseph Barnardin, President of the organization of American Catholic Bishops, has stated recently this is unlikely. One prominent American Catholic moral theologian has suggested that homosexuality will be a central moral issue for the church in the seventies, just as birth control was in the sixites.

DIGNITY has become a focal point in the growing gay liberation movement within the Catholic Church. It holds that "gays can express their sexuality in a manner that is consonent with Christ's teaching."

Please turn to page 19

LENTEN LIVING ROOM GROUP meeting in home of Los Angeles MCC member

Twenty Churches Respond To Lenten Opportunity

Twenty chruches of the Fellowship have now received their copy of the 28 page Manual containing materials and instructions for a Lenten Living Room program. They responded to a letter sent to all churches and study groups by the Reverend Jim Glyer, Minister of Education, MCCLA. Reverend Glyer's letter, sent in early December, described the program held during Lent of 1975 at MCCLA and offered to share the resource with any church requesting it.

Included in the 20 churches and study groups are two in England — London and Manchester — and one in Toronto, Canada. American churches and study groups participating include those located in Providence, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Ft. Wayne, Minneapolis, Wichita, St. Louis, New Orleans, Dallas, Grand Prairie, Denver, Salt Lake City, Albuquerque, Pomona, North Hollywood, Ventura, and San Jose (CA).

The original program in MCC-LA was highly successful, with over two hundred persons enrolled in 17 living room groups meeting on various nights of the week and in different parts of Los Angeles. Thirty-three carefully selected leaders received six weeks of training to prepare them to co-lead living room discussion groups. This extended training experience — outlined in some detail in the Manual — was one of the keys to the success of the program. Groups varied in size from 5 to 15 members. Many who participated felt that the Lenten series and been one of the great spiritual highlights of their lives. MCCLA has now begun training leaders and developing new materials for Lent of 1976.

Reverend Glyer explained, "One reason for the success of the Lenten Program is the deep hunger in the hearts of many for an experience of intimacy in a small fellowship of caring persons. The participants came to feel very close to each other. Ours is often a lonely community where people can easily come to feel that no one cares for them at any other than a physical and superficial level. The Lenten Living Room groups created an environment of concern and love."

Please turn to page 21

SHARING

BOSTON MINISTER HARRASSED OUT OF HOME

The Rev. Edward Hougen, newly elected worship coordinator of the Metropolitan Community Chruch of Boston, was recently forced to move out of his home in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston because of harassment, rock-throwing, and break-ins. Mr. Hougen, a United Church of Christ Minister who recently joined MCC and who has served in Churches in South Hadley and Orange, Massachusetts, "came out" as gay in his last month of service at the Orange church. There was much publicity about this in Massachusetts newspapers and in Gay-oriented publications across the country, because Mr. Hougen has for 10 years been happily married to a woman, Margaret, who is also a UCC minister. They have two young children, Sarah and Eddie, and they intend to stay together.

The move of this controversial family to Boston and their involvement with MCC Boston apparently aroused the anger of their new neighborhood. The Hougens found that their clothes were stolen off the backyard reel. Their children were at first welcomed by other children in the neighborhood but were later spurned. Rocks were thrown through their front windows. In fact, Mr. Hougen had to return home from a church retreat to rescue his children and babysitter after a particularly vicious attack of rocks and name-calling. The Hougens subsequently moved into the apartment of a church member until they could find other housing. When they returned to their Jamaica Plain home, they discovered another break-in and their television and stereo stolen. They have found other housing now in a safer part of the city.

REVEREND VAN HECKE BEGINS SECOND EVANGELISTIC TOUR

The Reverend Paul VanHecke left Los Angeles early in January for his second evangelistic tour of the United States in the current series. The itinerary includes St. Louis; Worcester, MA; Providence; New York; Washington, DC; Miami; Ft. Lauderdale; Tampa; Atlanta; New Orleans; Nashville; and Albuquerque.

Reverend VanHecke is traveling on a Greyhound bus pass purchased from love offerings given him on the tour.

The pre-Christmas preaching tour took Reverend VanHecke to Salt Lake City, Denver, Omaha, Chicago, Ft. Wayne, Indianapolis, Lexington, Akron, Detroit, Toronto, Ottawa, Boston and Kansas City.

Letters of appreciation let the nearly sightless 79 year old evangelist know what his ministry meant to the people. "To a wonderful loving man who made a very deep impression on me. It was truly a pleasure and joy to meet you and to be a part of your service here in our city of Toronto. May God continue to give you strength and guidance in your work. *Geri O'Brien.*" Dear Paul, I hated to see you go. I found myself caught within the love you radiate. No one who comes in contact with you can leave without gaining something, without changing in some way. Your ministry has done wonders for the church here. Through your visit, hopefully, we will all be better able to show our own love to others. You have moved me and I thank God for your influence on my life. We pray you will return."

NORTHWEST DISTRICT CONFERENCE ELECTS REVEREND GARY WILSON

The Reverend Gary Wilson, pastor of East Bay MCC in Oakland has been elected District Coordinator of the Northwest District of UFMCC. The Reverend Wally Lanchester, pastor of MCC Seattle, was elected Assistant District Coordinator; Mr. Tom Vaughn of San Francisco, secretary; and Mr. Herm Mank of San Francisco, treasurer.

MCC PHILADELPHIA SALUTES DORIS HAINES

Doris Haines is an exceptional new member of MCC Philadelphia. Although she is confined to a wheelchair as the result of an auto accident, she still has a zest for living and manages to maintain an active life style.

She is a native of suburban Philadelphia, but spent much of her childhood in the mountains of Pennsylvania.

Doris, who is the mother of three children, is a Registered Nurse and is a national medalist in the Wheelchair Olympics.

She is active in lesbian counseling and is coordinator of MCC's developing ministry to the disabled. She and her lover, Cathy, own their home in Norristown, which is open to women in need.

"At 28," she says, "the accident crushed my spinal cord and I had to reorganize my life. That seemed like such an impossibility as I saw my life crumble in front of me.

"First, my ex-husband took the children against my will and placed them in different foster homes. Then there was a year and a half of physical rehabilitation. In the hospital I had time to think a lot of things over. That is when I realized my gayness and decided

to accept it."

Doris is coordinator of handicapped ministries for MCC Philadelphia. "We now have sign language classes," she explains, "to teach us to speak to the deaf. We belong to 'Disabled in Action,' a group of disabled people working to eliminate all phases of discrimination of the disabled. We are placing ads around town and working on fund raisers for ramps to make places accessible for handicapped people. We are contacting hospitals, including the VA, and other service organizations to make them aware of the special needs of gay handicapped persons. At the same time we are carrying on this educational campaign at home in MCC in regards to attitudes toward handicapped people."

(Condensed from *The Bell Ringer*, MCC Philadelphia, December 1975)

WASHINGTON OFFICE PUBLISHES NEWSLETTER

Gays on the Hill is the title of a new publication from the office of Reverend Roy Birchard, Director of the Universal Fellowship office in the Center for the Study of Power and Peace, next door to the Senate Office Building, the Supreme Court, and the Capitol in Washington, DC.

The newsletter is mailed to all MCC churches, missions, and study groups, to the gay caucuses of the other denominations, and to gay groups and individuals interested in the work of MCC in the nation's capitol. It hopes to report regular progress of gay civil rights.. The address of this UFMCC office is:

Suite 210
110 Maryland Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002

The first issue of the newsletter identifies, with thumbnail sketches, the two openly gay staff members working for Members of Congress.

One is Craig Thigpen, a 24-year-old native of South Carolina who is employed in Representative Bella Abzug's office. "My being gay was a factor in being hired," Craig says. The woman who hired him called one of his references and asked circumspectly, "Do you think he would be *sympathetic* to some of the causes we are advocating?" Craig's reference said "yes," and now he answers letters, phone calls and inquires from the offices of other representatives about the gay issue.

Gary Aldridge, on the other hand, already was established as a Congressional aide when he decided to come out. When asked what the reaction was in the office of Senator Alan Cranston of California, where he works, Gary said, "My colleagues seemed as relieved as I was that I wasn't hiding anymore." Presently Gary is working with other staff people and gay leaders to prepare the way for introduction of gay rights legislation in the U.S. Senate.

THREE PULPITS VACANT IN SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

The Southwest District of UFMCC has three chartered churches seeking pastors to assume their pulpits.

The West Bay MCC in Santa Monica, CA, was made vacant when the Reverend Bonnie Daniel resigned that position to assume a call to the pulpit at MCC Cincinnati (OH).

The Pulpit Committee of MCC in Phoenix (AZ) is actively looking for a UFMCC minister to assume the pulpit in that city.

This month the pulpit of Trinity MCC in Riverside (CA) was vacated when Reverend Val Valrejean resigned to return to school.

Any Fellowship licensed or ordained minister who feels a call to any of these pulpits should contact the Pulpit Committee of the affected church.

MCC HONOLULU TAKES UNIQUE ACTION

At a time when the Universal Fellowship is undergoing unusual financial strain, MCC Honolulu, under the pastorate of Reverend Paul Peachy, has taken an unusual and so far unique step to help.

The Elders received this self-explanatory letter from Reverend Peachy:

"Greetings in the Name of Jesus, The Christ. In response to the letter dated December 12, 1975, from the Reverend Elder Troy D. Perry, we of MCC Hawaii would like the following known ...

"Whereas in St. Matthew 20:16, 'So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen ...'

"Whereas many in the Fellowship might consider MCC Hawaii as 'the least of these ...'

"We, therefore, by vote of the Board of Directors and consent of the congregation, do at this time, knowing that we are called to be God's people and chosen as one of the last/least to be first in the Fellowship, step forward to be the first to pre-pay our tithes.

"Enclosed you will find a check to pre-pay our tithe for the next three months, based on an anticipated income. With joyful heart we encourage other congregations of our Fellowship to pay their tithes on time.

"Also enclosed, please find a check to cover three months of IN UNITY plus postage and handling.

RENEWAL IN DETROIT

The Reverend Nancy Wilson, newly elected pastor of MCC Detroit, MI, is working with her new congregation toward the goal of the church renewal.

In a recent pastoral letter she assesses the past situation of the Detroit congregation and outlines plans for church revitalization:

"To date, MCC Detroit has been operating on a 'survival' level. With no fulltime leadership, faithful and hard-working brothers and sisters have struggled to keep the doors of the church open. Hopefully, we now have an opportunity to move beyond a survival-oriented existence.

"The Board of Directors and the newly formed 'Council on Ministries' (an evaluation group composed of lay church leaders) have agreed to name January 1976 as 'Church Evaluation and Renewal Month.'

"The highlight of the month will be 'Operation Resurrection,' an all day retreat on January 17th. The day will include worship, reflection, and workshops centering around the purpose and mission of MCC Detroit. We will begin to envision and plan for the life and growth of this church for the next two years. The following day, January 18th,

is the annual congregational meeting, at which, hopefully, the whole church may adopt and begin to implement the plan for renewal."

Reverend Wilson is an ordained minister in the Fellowship who has served churches in Boston and Worcester, MA. Her spouse, the Reverend Heather Anderson, is a licensed minister in the Fellowship. Reverend Anderson is very active in the Detroit MCC working in the community.

REVEREND BIGELOW ADDRESSES HUGE RALLY IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Late in November the Reverend Tom Bigelow, Pastor of MCC London, was asked to be one of the six speakers for a huge rally in famed Trafalgar Square in the heart of London.

Gay organizations from all over the country gathered to make it the largest gay gathering ever held in Euorpe. Many members of MCC London were among the more than 3000 who heard speeches calling for law reforms.

The rally was sponsored by the Campaign for Homosexual Equality. The route led the marchers from Hyde Park past Piccadilly Circus to Trafalgar Square. Since MCC London has its place of worship near Trafalgar Square, they had many guests after the rally for tea and conversation.

Angela Needham, an exhorter in the London MCC congregation, was coordinator of arrangements for the rally.

Ms. Needham is also serving as Worship Coordinator for a new study group in Bristol.

Reverend Bigelow has spent considerable time in Scotland laying the groundwork for a study group in Glasgow.

REVEREND JIM HILL INSTALLED AS PASTOR OF MCC INDIANAPOLIS

The Reverend James Hill was installed as pastor of MCC Indianapolis on Sunday, November 16, 1975.

The Reverend Bonnie Daniel, newly elected pastor of MCC Cincinnati, delivered the opening prayer and the Reverend Jay Thomas, former pastor of MCC Cincinnati and now Assistant District Coordinator for the Great Lakes District, gave the sermon as Reverend Hill was installed in a sanctuary filled to capacity.

After attending a United Methodist Seminary in Illinois, Reverend Hill was ordained by the United Methodist Church in Wisconsin in 1971. He served a year's internship and worked as youth minister in several churches before entering Good Shepherd Parish MCC in Chicago, where he served as an exhorter. He was called to MCC Indianapolis as Worship Coordinator,. He was licensed in the Fellowship at General Conference in Dallas in 1975 and, on September 15, 1975, he was elected pastor of MCC Indianapolis by the congregation of that church.

Reverend Hill holds a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Wisconsin State University.

NEW ZEALAND GROUP FEATURED ON TV

Recently Auckland MCC was featured on a local television station. Their local newsletter, "Outreach," describes it like this:

"The two TV cameramen who came to take pictures of our Sunday evening service were pleasant, intelligent, interested and Christian. Once the service started, we were conscious of the cameramen moving around outside our circle, and also of the intense heat from the lights they used. We felt it was a service of witness. Four interviews were held in the next few days resulting in the short documentary that was shown.

"Immediate reactions from some non-gays showed derision and ignorance.

"However, it is our hope that the publicity we did get will be the means of bringing other men and women to our meetings, knowing that they will be welcomed with love and will be among friends."

REVEREND NANCY WILSON ATTENDS MAYOR'S INAUGURATION

Reverend Nancy Wilson, Pastor of MCC Detroit, and her lover Reverend Heather Anderson sat at the head table for the breakfast inauguration of Highland Park's new Mayor, Jessie Mieler, on January 2.

It was billed as a prayer breakfast. Twelve members of MCC Detroit were present as Rev. Wilson spoke after giving the invocation. She identified MCC and its outreach to people in the gay community. She called for an end to police practices of enticement and entrapment and harrassment of people in the gay community.

Highland Park is a suburb on the Woodward corridor, surrounded by the City of Detroit. Trinity United Methodist Church, where the Detroit MCC congregation has had a welcome for the last four years, is located on Woodward

Joy and Peace

Avenue in Highland Park.

Reverend Ken Woodside, Pastor of Trinity, along with the 25-member Administrative Council of the inner city church have championed the rights of minorities both in the church and in the community.

SUE ROBINSON IS DEACON OF THE MONTH AT MCC ST. LOUIS

Deacon of the Month for December in MCC St. Louis is Sue Robinson. Sue is a Registered Nurse and Surgical Assistant in a large St. Louis hospital. Sue and her lover, Judy Weber, began attending MCC in St. Louis in 1973. Eventually Sue was elected to the Board of Directors and continued until April of 1975 when she resigned in order to devote her time to the deaconate of which she is chairperson.

Sue's favorite pastimes include woodworking, refinishing furniture, and working on cars.

(Condensed from *The New Light*, MCC St. Louis, December 1975)

WINTER REGISTRATION AT SAMARITAN BIBLE SCHOOL

Samaritan Bible School has thirty-one students registered for the Winter term which is now in progress. This includes 21 men and 10 women. The students come from all parts of the country; from Missouri, Florida, Texas, Tennessee, Nebraska, Montana, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Several have come to Los Angeles specifically to attend Samaritan.

Under their newly adopted by-laws, the students are organized into the Associated Student Body of Samaritan Bible School. They have elected the following officers: Chairperson, Ms. Lucia Chappelle; Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Terry Foster; Secretary, Mr. Michael Scott, Treasurer, Ms. Flo Fleischman; and Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Griff Guenther. Mr. Guenther is also editor of the student publication, and Mr. Ted Richmond heads the Social Activities Committee. The students plan to revive the student publication *Agape*, possibly as a regular feature in IN UNITY so as to attain a wider circulation. Plans are also underway for a school retreat in the Spring.

ARE YOU ONE OF THE 7 OUT OF 8 WHO DO NOT HAVE A WILL?

It is a sad note that many persons pass on from this world without writing a will. Most of us keep putting it off until we are older, closer to retirement. Consciously speaking, this isn't really a wise move, for one never knows when their time may come. None of us are guaranteed to live to see retirement and we should be prepared both spiritually and financially.

All of us have heard of cases where someone has passed away without a will. Usually one of two things happen: there is a big family fuss about who gets what, or the State takes it. Do you care what happens to all the material accumulation you have earned throughout your working life? If you do, you had better do something soon to be assured your estate is distributed in the manner in which you desire. No matter what your financial station is in this life, you may be surprised at the magnitude of your estate left when you go on to another level.

While you are thinking about your will, remember those who embraced you when seeking spiritual guidance, the ones who listened to your problems and joys, and of course, your Lord God. How can you better express love, care, appreciation and faith than by remembering MCC in your will? The Church and God will love you for it!

(Adapted from *The New Light*, MCC St. Louis, December 1975)

FAITH

NOTES FROM AUCKLAND

From *Outreach*, the newsletter of the MCC Auckland Study Group we learn that the small group has a number of effective committees operating to serve the needs of the people.

The social committee has provided a number of functions, such as wine and cheese evenings, which have drawn large numbers of people together in a friendly social atmosphere.

The women's group has been set up primarily to deal with needs and problems of special concern to women. They recently had a pleasant evening out at Maxi's Pizzaria where they chatted, wined, and dined for nearly three hours.

The welfare committee has set up a counselling group, devoting considerable attention to training and preparation for this important ministry of the church.

(For other news, read the Letter to the editor in this issue.)

SHARE WITH A DISTANT FRIEND

A friend from India has written the Fellowship Offices requesting Pen Pals. Would you like to have a friend in India? Write to:

Mr. P. H. Vis Wanathan
22 Jawahar Society
R. V. De Sai Road
Baroda, 390001, India

God's Country: a new year's meditation

By Rev. Edward T. Hougen
Worship Coordinator of MCC Boston

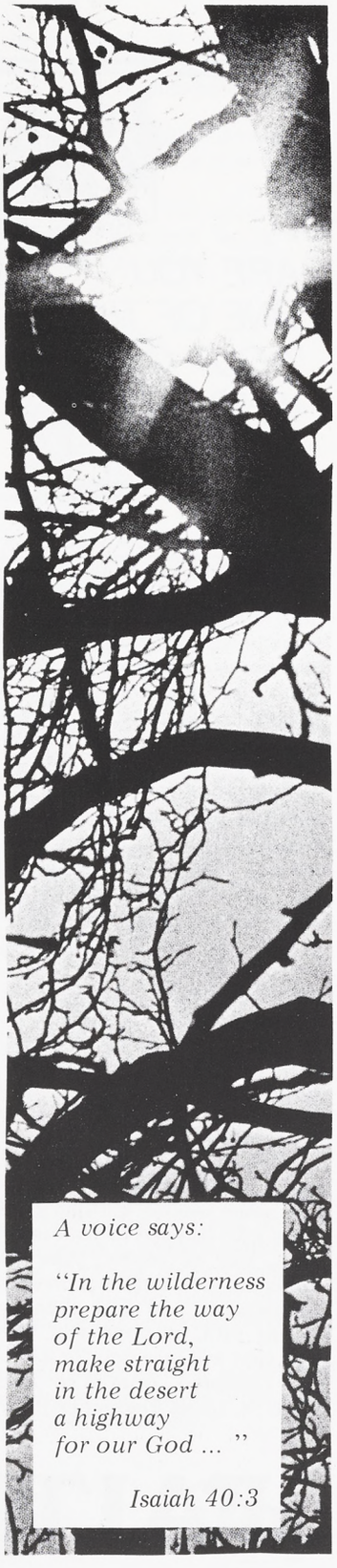
The picture that usually comes to my mind when I hear the term "God's country" is Barry Goldwater riding a horse surrounded by the vast Arizona wasteland. This image of God's country, as the haunt of the Marlboro man, has always bothered me since the rugged terrain of the wilderness is marked by its absence of people. And for me, at least, God is most clearly present in the midst of people.

Yet the theme of the wilderness as God's country has a real validity. Those of you familiar with the gospel will recall that Jesus went out into the wilderness to prepare for his ministry. Many of the prophets withdrew to the wilderness in order to receive God's Word. The wilderness throughout the ages has been a place where God is encountered. Perhaps this is because the wilderness or desert is an elemental place, a place unfettered by the trappings and distractions of civilization, a place where one is open to hearing God.

More important than the notion of the wilderness as an external physical place, however, is the realization that the wilderness is a place inside of you, an elemental place free of the masks and pretenses and images put on to impress others. The wilderness within is that vulnerable and confused and frightened place that can fill you with anxiety or despair.

Those of you reading this who are gay know that wilderness and its terrain, for as a gay person you've probably spent much of your life either in the wilderness or fleeing from it. Perhaps some of you now may feel you are in the wilderness as you struggle to deal with an anxiety around "coming out" or problems within a relationship or with feelings of isolation or loneliness. If that is the case, whatever the pain or difficulty, remember that you are in God's country. Remember that it is during those times you are feeling least self-sufficient and most in need that you are really open to encountering and receiving God's love. Indeed the struggle you have known as a gay person in coming to accept and be yourself is not a sign of God's indifference but rather of God's love. For all of God's children must wander a time in the wilderness if they are to discover who they are and who God is.

Most men and women spend their lives running away from God's country, afraid of finding themselves, preferring instead to live out the comfortable and empty life of conforming to others' pictures. But as a gay person, the burden of being someone else has forced you into the wilderness in order that you might be found by a God who loves you and values you and would give you more than you are ready to receive. The prophet Isaiah writes: "Comfort, comfort my people . . . say to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned." Isaiah is speaking to you, because you are one of God's people. Whatever desert you may have known in the past, whatever wilderness you may be experiencing now, take heart and know that this barren and alien place is God's country. A way in you is being prepared, prepared for that most marvelous of all things — the glory of the Lord to be revealed. *



NOTES

LEADING CATHOLIC BISHOP MAKES CAUTIOUS STATEMENT

Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati, president of the 300 member body of U.S. Catholic bishops, made a cautious mention of gay people in November in his statement to the bishops who had elected him their president a year ago.

According to the *Washington Post*, November 27th, the archbishop spelled out the "unfinished business" before the American bishops. He cited human rights, moral confusion, and the need for serious dialogue with women, divorced and remarried Catholics, and gay Catholics who are seeking equality in the church. "We must never write off anyone. We must remain in dialogue, even if the dialogue does not seem to be leading to mutually satisfactory solutions."

But in another speech Archbishop Bernardin, speaking of the "thorny issue of homosexuality," is quoted as re-emphasizing the Catholic teaching that homosexual conduct is morally wrong. "I do not anticipate any changes in that position," he is quoted to have said.

On the subject of women, a committee of bishops (all male) reported that the participation of women in the ministry, the ordination of women priests, the merits of the equal rights amendment, the role of women in the family and society demand "urgent and extensive attention from the church."

ANGLICANS DIVIDE OVER WOMEN PRIESTS

The Anglican Church of Canada has approved the ordination of women. The historic vote last June preceded by only two weeks a decision by the Church of England not to start ordaining women now.

In the U.S., where 200 Episcopalian women are studying for the ministry, the heated issue is becoming the key in electing delegates for the triennial convention in Minneapolis next September.

The ordination of several American women so far has been branded irregular, but one bishop, John P. Craine of Indianapolis, said he is refusing to ordain any more men until the issue is resolved.

(From *The Gay Lutheran*, January-February 1976)

ROCHESTER EPISCOPALIANS SUPPORT GAY MINISTRY

In an action termed "historic," the Rochester, NY, Episcopal Diocese Convention voted in November to evaluate a budget for gay ministry.

The Bishop of the Diocese, The Right Reverend Robert Spears, had appointed a priest for the ministry in 1973 to direct attention of the church to gays within the diocese. No money was appropriated for the assignment.

After the budget approval was passed, it was remarked that this is "the first time that a dioceasan body of the Catholic (Anglican, Roman, Orthodox) tradition has voted so supportively for a gay ministry."

DIGNITY PRESENTS 2000 SIGNATURES TO CATHOLIC BISHIPS

In connection with the National Day of Prayer (reported in IN UNITY, November 1975) sponsored by Brian McNaught, chairperson of Dignity's national social action program, 2000 signatures were presented to the U.S. Catholic Bishops asking for recognition of the rights of gay people.

The signatures included those of thirteen Episcopal bishops, heads of religious orders, and theologians.

More than 150 Dignity members from 13 of Dignity's 44 chapters attended the Mass of Reconciliation. It was followed by speeches by national president, Paul Diederich, and McNaught. There was a presentation of a film on Dignity, and finally a reading of the statement from the U.S. Catholic Bishops:

"We want you to know that we are happy that you are here, and that we share your pastoral concern for the gay community. We really want you to know that concern, and not to feel put off in any way ... Know that we very much care about the gay community, even if we differ with you 'ideologically'."

The Mass was timed to coincide with the meeting of all the Catholic bishops in Washington. McNaught arranged a hospitality hour in the Statler Hilton and invited all the bishops to join them for dialog. The first visitors were Archbishop Joseph Bernardin and Bishop James Rausch, the president and general secretary of the bishops' conference.

Later, in a meeting with the officially appointed liaison bishop, Dignity officers were assured that the bishops would address the question of the oppression of gay Catholics by appointing a committee of theologians, social scientists, and gay persons to study the matter.

The *Newsweek* reporter present at the affair indicated that the popular news weekly is preparing a major story on homosexuality and gave assurance that it would be quite different from the *Time* feature which was not well received by gay leaders.

METHODIST WOMAN: ONE OUT OF 500

Marjorie S. Matthews has been appointed District Superintendent of the West Michigan Conference's Grand Traverse District of the United Methodist Church effective January 1, 1976.

It is believed that she will be the only woman in that position among the more than 500 District Superintendents in her church. Only one other woman has preceded her in the District Superintendency since the various groups merged to form the United Methodist Church. (*Newscope*, November 28, 1975)

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST PASSES RESOLUTION

IN UNITY has overlooked an important resolution passed by the Tenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ last July. It is a carefully worded and well thought-out statement concerning the special needs of gay and bisexual persons in the church's professional leadership.

"Insofaras social, legal, and religious condemnation of homosexuality has inflicted immeasurable emotional, psychological, and at times physical suffering upon the lives of homosexual and bisexual persons and their families, the church has a responsibility to respond to the special needs of such persons.

"Of immediate concern are the needs of homosexual and bisexual ministers, directors of religious education, and others in the professional leadership of the United Church of Christ.

"Therefore, the Tenth General Synod responds by directing the Office of Christian Life and Leadership to:

"1. Compile and distribute a nation-wide listing of both church and non-church related counseling resources that offer non-judgmental counseling for homosexual and bisexual persons and their families.

"2. Compile and distribute an annually updated listing of vocational guidance and counseling agencies with experience in counseling homosexual and bisexual professionals.

"3. Distribute a comprehensive bibliography of books, articles, and audiovisuals concerning human sexuality.

"The United Church of Christ has not faced in depth the issues of human sexuality. Changing morality and ethics within American Society present both problems and challenges to the church.

THEREFORE, The Tenth General Synod directs the Executive Council to commission a study concerning the dynamics of human sexuality and the theological basis for a Christian ethics concerning human sexuality, and to recommend postures for the church to be presented to the Eleventh General Synod."

GAY METHODISTS ORGANIZE

The Northern California-Nevada chapter of the United Methodist Gay Caucus will soon be organizing an unofficial delegation to appear at the General Conference which is held every four years for the purpose of deciding vital issues which affect the entire church body. In April, 1976, the conference will be held in Portland, Oregon, for a two week period. Those persons attending will assist members of the *national* United Methodist Gay Caucus in attempting to educate the official delegates to the conference.

Two heated controversies revolve around Methodist Gays. First, the ordaining of gay ministers and second, the wording of the Social Principles section of the Methodist Discipline.. The group will endeavor to soften the homophobic language which states that "we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching."

Interested gays who are Methodist should contact the Northern California group by writing Frank Howell, 1784 Gazelle Way, Hayward, CA 94541.

Those interested in joining the Southern California-Arizona Methodist Caucus (which also includes Hawaii) are urged to contact Fred Methered, Sexual Identity Center, 2457 Kanealii Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii.

COUNSELING AND HOMOSEXUALITY

Information is available pertaining to a number of resources for counseling and homosexuality.

The Homosexual Community Counseling Center (HCCC) in New York publishes a journal and conducts conferences that have been receiving excellent reaction.

Dr. Ralph Blair is director of the center and editor of the journal. *The Homosexual Counseling Journal* is available to individuals for $10 per year. The address is: HCCC, Inc., 30 East 60th St., New York, NY 10022.

The Reverend James Harris, Pastor of MCC Dallas, is quoted in the HCCC brochure: "Let me tell you again how much we enjoyed the HCCC conference here in Dallas."

The HCCC conferences begin at 9 am and end at 4:30 pm on the day scheduled. The fee is $20 per person or $15 per person if three or more register from the same organization. The cost includes lunch and literature.

Upcoming HCCC conferences are:

Jan 31 — Chapel Hill
Feb 2 — Knoxville
Feb 14 — Birmingham
Feb 16 — Jacksonville
Mar 6 — New York
Mar 20 — Boston
Apr 3 — Des Moines
Apr 5 — Fargo
Apr 10 — Milwaukee
Apr 24 — Huntington, WV
May 8 — Denver
May 10— Seattle

Applications can be sent to the center. A confirmation letter with details will be sent upon receiving a letter of application.

GAY ISSUES CONFRONT PRESBYTERIANS

There are several issues relating to the gay community which the Presbyterian church must face in the near future.

1. Joan Abrams, 41, a lesbian, announced her homosexuality in her seminary class in San Anselmo, CA, last year and was denied readmittance this year. Her local church in Palo Alto, CA, is backing her in her appeal to continue her candidacy for the ministry.

2. The New York Presbytery has an openly gay candidate for ordination who qualifies in revery respect. That issue will have to be dealt with.

3. The Chicago Presbytery approved the openly gay ministry of David Sindt, as reported in the November IN UNITY, then later withdrew its approval. Mr. Sindt is the founder and coordinator of the Presbyterian Gay Caucus.

LUTHERANS SEEKING POLICY ON CHANGING LIFESTYLES

The Lutheran Church in America's synod presidents have directed that guidelines be prepared for dealing with pastors who are divorced, alcoholic, or gay.

There was an expectation that the guidelines would be ready for the LCA convention in Boston, July 21-28.

hope

FRIENDSHIP
by June Norris

When there are times of tribulation
When your sorrow sees no end
And you wonder, "WHY this trouble?"
It is good to have a friend.

When your courage wanes and waivers
And your faith appears in vain,
Then a friend is precious comfort
And will share your grief and pain.

And when TIME .. God's greatest healer
Ebbs the ache and tears that flow,
Ne'er forgotten is the kindness
And the bonds of friendship grow.

SACRAMENTO DIGNITY CHAPLAIN ATTENDS MCC DISTRICT CONFERENCE

"On Saturday, November 8th, an MCC District Conference was held in Sacramento. Father Larry was invited to participate in the prayer service which completed the observance. The obvious Christian spirit, beauty of the service, and fraternity made a deep impression, Father Larry reported. It is hoped that there will be many times in the future that Dignity and MCC members can pray and share together." (From Dignity Sacramento Newsletter, December 1975)

SEXUALITY, COUNSELING AND POETRY

Unitarian Universalist Gay Caucus is sponsoring a workshop designed to train people to conduct courses "About Your Sexuality." It will be held at the Cedar Lane Unitarian Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethseda, MD, February 13-15, 1976.

Writers and counselors are invited to submit articles on: gay counseling experience; advice for helping relationships; experiences from the whole range of life; counseling as a resource for continuing gay growth throughout life and relationships. Submit material to Dan Fee, 64 Fisher Avenue, Roxbury, MA 02120, by February 15 for an upcoming Integrity publication.

Gay poets are invited to submit materials for a future Integrity publication to John Soldo, 7 East 81st St, New York, NY 10028, by February 1, 1976.

TEXAS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE URGES END OF DISCRIMINATION

The General Assembly of the Texas Catholic Conference has passed a resolution urging greater understanding of homosexuals.

The "Church and Homosexual" resolution suggested establishment of a committee of theologians and "responsible and knowledgeable persons" from the social and human sciences to study the homosexual condition within the context of Christianity.

The committee would function "for the purpuse of ending unjust discrimination against homosexual members" of the Church and "develop a positive pastoral approach to them."

The General Assembly also encouraged the conference to re-evaluate the Church's past and present involvement with black Catholics. Included in this resolution were suggestions for improved methods of recruiting black men and women for all forms of ministry.

DIGNITY PUBLISHES PITTENGER ARTICLE

Dignity, the national newsletter of Dignity, the national organization which serves gay Catholics, reprinted with permission Dr. Pittenger's article, "Becoming Human," from the October IN UNITY in their December issue. Their address for this excellent newsletter is: Wayne Ward, Editor, *Dignity*, 755 Boylston Street, Room 514, Boston, MA 02116.

HOMOSEXUAL CATHOLICS = Continued

HOMOSEXUAL CATHOLICS: A PRIMER FOR DISCUSSION is an attempt to reach two groups: Catholics who want to learn more about homosexuality, especially as it relates to the Catholic Church; and gay Catholics who are attempting to integrate their sexual orientation with their religious beliefs and practices.

The book is written in question-answer form and covers a wide variety of topics relating to homosexuality. Some of the questions are:

Can a person be a practicing Catholic and an active homosexual?

Are there new approaches to homosexuality in the Catholic community?

What does the Old Testament have to say about homosexuality?

The New Testament?

St. Paul?

Can the church change its position on moral teachings?

What do other Christian churches teach about homosexuality?

What about Catholic homosexuals and Confession?

Can a gay Catholic receive Holy Communion while actively involved in a sexual relationship?

How can the Catholic Church help homosexuals?

What are the real needs of gay Catholics in the church today?

It is the opinion of this reviewer that this little booklet will touch thousands upon thousands of lives in a way that will shed new light where there has been so much grimness, new hope where there has been so much hopelessness, and new understanding where there has been so much phobia, ignorance, and destructive counseling.

As a former Director of Religious Education in one of the largest Roman Catholic parishes in the United States, this reviewer can speak with some knowledge of the potential use of this *PRIMER* in Catholic pulpits, confessionals, counseling sessions, and religious education programs for adults, high school and junior high school students. The disaster it would save! The ruination it could prevent! The help it will provide is limited only by the openess of those who could use it for the good of the people of God. rrm

† I am so very proud of the job the staff is doing on revamping the IN UNITY. It looks great.

Reverend Frank Crouch
Assistant Pastor, MCC St. Louis

† I wish to thank you for the wonderful, new, exciting IN UNITY. It's really what we've been waiting for. Our church is enjoying the new series and we pray for many more issues to come.

Reverend Nancy Wilson, Pastor
MCC Detroit

† I have just finished reading the December issue of IN UNITY and felt that I must share with you my appreciation for a job well done. Particularly noticed and appreciated is the effort to have IN UNITY reflect an "International" Universal Fellowship — by including news and articles from various groups. Many Thanks.

Reverend Elder Carol S. Cureton
Pastor, MCC St. Louis

† You are doing a first class job with the magazine. IN UNITY is something of which we can all be proud. When I was in Glasgow I used it for evangelism. There is something about putting a well written and well produced publication in someone's hands, then stepping back and letting the Spirit take over. It is a very effective tool for outreach. Thank you from all of us in Britain.

I very much like the piece you had on the first native Canadian minister. I hope we will soon be able to have a similar story about a native born person from this country.

Reverend Tom Bigelow
Pastor, MCC London

† We have received our December issue of IN UNITY and I want to tell you how much I enjoyed it. I've been wanting to tell you ever since October that the format and content are just great. This is a journal the people of MCC can be proud of. I personally use it in telling the story of MCC to my straight and gay friends.

(Name withheld on request)

† Thanks for the IN UNITY. It is just super. Just wanted to let you know that Reverend Ron Burcham is the Assistant District Coordinator, and Reverend Bob Arthur is the correspondent for this district.

Reverend Charlie Arehart
District Coordinator
Mid-Central District

† Many thanks for the copies of IN UNITY. We are but a small group of people here across the Pacific in this MCC Study Group. Because of the loss of our Worship Coordinator, Ms. Jo Biggs, we feel a little vulnerable and would appreciate your thoughts and prayers.

We are conscious of our brothers and sisters overseas and yet feel somewhat isolated in these days because of the insularity of New Zealand. Reverend Carlton has been here. Reverend Don Mence who takes our services will be attending the Australian Regional Conference, January 1-5, unfortunately perhaps alone.

We hope Reverend Perry will be able to come and visit us after this conference. He mentioned the possibility of staying at least three days. That should really boost our spirits. We are still the only group in New Zealand. It is ever encouraging to see MCC so vital and alive in the USA and that gives us here an example to emulate.

Michael Gosit, Secretary
MCC Auckland, POB 3897
Auckland, New Zealand

† The Legislative Committee of the National Gay Task Force is anxious to compile as comprehensive a file as possible covering cases of discrimination against homosexuals. We know that your group has a great deal of expertise in this field and are hoping that you may have developed some of the information we need. Not only do we get requests for this sort of thing from other states and gay groups, but the information is crucial to the passage of the Gay Rights Bill now in Congress. We would be most grateful if you would send us whatever information you may have. Names, places, and dates would, of course, be ideal but even undocumented cases of discrimination would be most welcome. Thank you very much.

Bertha B. Riley
Legislative Committee
National Gay Task Force
80 Fifth Avenue,
New York, NY 10011

Correspondence Courses Available

Samaritan Bible School is now offering two correspondence courses: "The Life and Teaching of Jesus" and "The Old Testament Prophets." There are sixteen persons presently enrolled in the first course, the one on Jesus. These sixteen include licensed ministers, exhorters, exhorter candidates, and lay people from MCC's all over the United States. The second course, the one on the prophets, is new and enrollments are now being accepted.

Both courses are an attempt on the part of Samaritan Bible School to serve MCC clergy and members all through the Fellowship, especially those who find it impossible to come to Los Angeles to attend the classes offered by the school.

Both of the courses offered have ten lessons of home study. For each lesson there is a reading assignment, study guide questions, and a test. Each student is free to move at his/her own pace through the course. The two present courses have different formats. The "Jesus" course has short reading assignments and then very specific, mostly multiple-choice questions. The "Prophets" course has more extensive reading assignments and then short essay questions.

The Trustees of Samaritan Bible School want to be able to provide an ever-increasing number of correspondence courses and two more are in the planning stage: "Paul and His Epistles" and "UFMCC Polity and Programs."

"The Life and Teachings of Jesus" course is based on the text *The Life and Teaching of Jesus* by Edward Bauman (Westminster Press, 1960). It covers primarily material found in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). The aim of the course is to help people discover what the earthly life of Jesus was all about and what He taught. Most people are aware of the basic Christian beliefs about Jesus Christ, but there was more to Jesus than the incarnation, crucifixion, and ressurection. There was His whole life between His birth and death in which He was the Word of God (God speaking and acting in our world). The "Life of Jesus" section of the course includes what we know about Jesus' infancy and childhood, His young adulthood, His short ministry, His trial and execution and His resurrection. The "Teachings of Jesus" section includes what Jesus taught about God, the Kingdom, reconciliation, new life and His own role in all of this.

"The Old Testament Prophets" correspondence course is based on several volumes of a paperback Biblical commentary series called *The Old Testament Reading Guide* (Liturgical Press). The volumes used in the course include: (No. 14) Introduction to the Prophetical Books; (No. 15) Amos, Hosea, Micah; (No. 16) Isaiah 1-39; (No. 19) Ezekiel; (No. 20) Isaiah 40-66; (No. 21) Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Joel; and (No. 28) Daniel, and Jonah. Each of these nine short booklets comprises a lesson for the course. The tenth lesson is based upon an article written by Dr. William Holladay entitled "Jeremiah and Women's Liberation." The aim of the course is to expose the student to what prophecy is all about, and to apply their message to the present day.

Each correspondence course offered by the Samaritan Bible School costs $40. This cost includes textbook(s), study guide questions, tests, and correction of tests at SBS. Anyone wishing to enroll in one of the correspondence courses presently offered or in a future course should contact the Registrar, the Reverend Jeffrey Pulling, Samaritan Bible School, POB 36277, Los Angeles, CA 90036. ✱

Elder Sandmire Meets With D.C. Conference Planners

Reverend Elder James Sandmire met in Washington, DC, in November with members of the various planning committes of MCC Washington while on his eastern trip.

Of course, the big planning in Washington these days centers around preparations for the 1976 UFMCC General Conference and Affirmation '76, the rally in Washington on the last day of the Conference to which all gay people everywhere are invited.

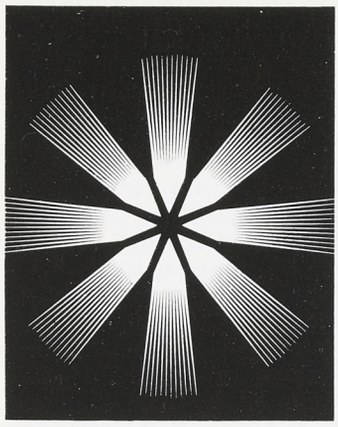
Ken Collins, enabler of the Communications team, reports that Elder Sandmire's "first and most emphatic concern was that the General Conference build up the church — not just in membership and money — but in increased stature in the religious community, the gay community, and the community at large."

Washington is getting ready for the greatest General Conference ever. Reverend Roy Birchard's office is keeping in daily contact with happenings on the Hill, and there are steady developments in the plans for speakers of national renown, both at the Conference and at Affirmation '76. ■

REV. BILL JOHNSON WITHDRAWS FROM UCC GAY CAUCUS

In a letter to the United Church of Christ Gay Caucus, the Reverend Bill Johnson, first openly gay minister ordained in UCC, writes, "These past five years of struggle have taken their toll on my physical, psychological, and emotional health. There are limits to which any individual can struggle with the sexism and homophobia of the church ... I find that I must now care for myself and withdraw from the struggle with the institutional church.

"I have asked to be relieved of my responsibilities on the Caucus Coordinating Committee, doing so with trust that the important work of the Caucus will continue ... I shall maintain my standing as a minister of the United Church and will continue to give myself to advocating the concerns of our people as well as involving myself directly in ministry with our gay sisters and brothers ..." ✱



Male Attitudes Toward Women Changing in Philadelphia

As I sit back and think of the men at MCC Philadelphia, I sit not in hate or bitterness, but with thanks to God for reaching into male personalities. Though they have been conditioned to be oppressors of women, yet I see a miracle taking place.

Last March, only nine months ago, I attended MCC Philadelphia in search of a church where I could reach out to my lesbian sisters.

I had this vision that God wanted me to help relieve the oppressed relationship we all have had. This was especially because of being homosexual, with most religious systems trying to convince us that we were sinners of all sinners. Even Jesus Christ could not relieve us, according to this attitude!

At this time, there was exactly one female exhorter candidate and approximately four women attending Sunday night services.

As I talked with members of MCC, I had the impression that women were "tokens" and the concerns women had and their relationship about God being male-dominated seemed to be the biggest joke going! One male member after another would say, "God loves you, HE really loves you." Then he would laugh and say, "I mean SHE really loves you." And walk away grinning.

This attitude really made me nauseated!

However, thanks to God for providing us with adequate leadership, such as Reverend Don Borbe, former assistant pastor to Reverend Freda Smith at MCC Sacramento and now pastor of MCC Philadelphia. Now with the passing of time, we are witnessing men refer to God as neither male nor female, but as much more than either sex can contain. We are witnessing men discuss among each other the need to go beyond the old image of a male defined God.

They are showing concern and a willingness to change their old stereotyping of women being brainless, lacking in strength or creativity or concern for others in the community. These men are seeing with this change an influx of women into the church.

And women are also taking responsibilities in the various ministries: woman ministry, handicapped ministry, prison ministry. Now there are as many as thirty women attending Sunday services.

This attitude is not only affecting women, but the men also. They are beginning to recognize their feminine side in a positive way. Through Reverend Borbe, men began to realize they had female qualities that are not shameful, but characteristics of all human beings necessary for adequate wholeness.

Yes, MCC Philadelphia has changed. The miracle of love and unity is starting to unfold. God grant continued awareness of God's feminine-masculine, unlimited attributes. As this continues to occur, may our interactions become more wholesome. ✱

SAMARITAN BIBLE SCHOOL = Continued

one year of college (two years of college after June 1977) with an acedemic record that shows the applicant's ability to pursue college-level work, a transcript of high school and college courses, and a letter of recommendation from the applicant's pastor as to educational and character background. All requests for information or application forms should be directed to the Registrar, the Reverend Jeffrey Pulling, Samaritan Bible School, P. O. Box 36277, Los Angeles, CA 90036.

TWENTY CHURCHES = Continued

The "family" program in MCCLA grew naturally out of the Lenten program as person after person said, "This is the best thing I have ever experienced. It must go on." Thus it happened that many of the Lenten groups became permanent "families."

If there is sufficient interest, a request will be made of the Elders to schedule a Workshop at the General Conference in Washington, DC, next Summer. Reverend Glyer pointed out that at such a workshop at least three goals could be achieved:

1. Included in the 20 church bodies are congregations of various sizes. It could be helpful to learn how other congregations adapted the Manual to meet their needs. We could learn from one another.

2. Churches considering a Lenten program for 1977 could attend and learn about both the problems and the advantages of such a program. This could help them evaluate more realistically what such a series might offer them.

3. Even more important, the churches present could bring with them materials and ideas from programs which have worked well in their congregations. It is often true that good resources are not shared because of the lack of some practical method of swapping. An "Idea Swap" might be good for all of us.

"One reason for the success of the Lenten Program is the deep hunger in the hearts of many for an experience of intimacy in a small fellowship of caring persons."

Further information on the Lenten Program can be obtained from Reverend Glyer, MCCLA, 1050 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, CA 90015. ■

NEW DEAN = Continued

in 1973, he has served since then as the Fellowship Treasurer. He has also chaired the Faith, Fellowship and Order Commission. He has served on the Board of Trustees of Samaritan Bible School and as its President.

Ms. Jerri Slifer is a new addition to the faculty and Board of Trustees of Samaritan Bible School. She received her BA/BS degree from Texas Women's University in 1957 and a Master of Arts degree from the same school in 1959. Both degrees were in Education. She also attended California State University — San Francisco, where she earned a Master of Arts in History in 1970.

Ms. Slifer has taught in high schools and colleges in Texas, Illinois, California, and for five years in Taiwan. She has taught primarily in history, sociology, and English.

Ms. Slifer grew up as a Roman Catholic and attended parochial schools through junior high. She left the Roman Catholic Church during her college years.

She did not find another satisfying church home until she visited the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles in March 1975, three weeks after she returned to the United States from Taiwan. She became a member of MCC Los Angeles in July 1975.

Besides teaching in SBS, she is also treasurer of the Board of Trustees of SBS. She is one of the lay leaders for the MCC Exercise in Christian Living.

Ms. Slifer is presently employed in a bank international credit department.

The Reverend Jeffrey Pulling, formerly the associate pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Boston, joined the SBS faculty after he moved to Los Angeles in the Summer of 1975. Reverend Pulling is also Registrar of the school and was recently appointed to the Board of Trustees where he serves as secretary.

A native of Vermont, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in religion from Syracuse University (Syracuse, NY) in 1971. He is a graduate of Andover Newton Theological School (Newton Centre, MA) from which he received a Master of Divinity degree *cum laude*.

A former member of the United Church of Christ, he served in a variety of ways in that denomination during his high school and college years. He was state president of the Vermont United Church Youth, delegate to the National Youth Forum of UCC, alternate delegate to the General Synod of UCC, Vacation Church School worker for the Vermont Conference of UCC, director of local church workcamps, and interim pastor for a rural parish of three churches.

While at Syracuse University, he was involved with the United Campus Christian Fellowship. His field work at seminary included youth work at a United Methodist Church in North Quincy, MA, and interning with the Homophile Community Health Service and the Metropolitan Community Church of Boston. Also at seminary he co-taught a course on human sexuality and he did much consciousness-raising about gayness among the eight seminaries in the Boston area.

Reverend Pulling has been involved with MCC since 1972 and is a member of the Fellowship's Christian Education Commission. He was assistant director of MCC's first Exercise in Christian Community Living.

He is presently employed as a hospital phlebotomist.

The Reverend Richard C. Vincent, currently President of Samaritan Bible School, has also been an Elder of the Fellowship since his election to that position in 1973. He is the only full time Elder working in the International Offices of the Fellowship along with the Reverend Troy Perry.

Reverend Vincent was born and raised in a Baptist family and completed high school in Kirksville, Missouri. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II, serving in the tank corps before entering officers training and receiving a commission as a Second Lieutenant. While in officers training, he attended Louisiana Polytechnic Institute (Ruston, LA), Oberlin College (Oberlin, OH), and Purdue University (West Lafayette, IN). After the war, he completed studies at Purdue and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering in 1947. While attending Purdue, he joined the Roman Catholic Church.

After graduating from Purdue, Reverend Vincent worked on the faculty of Pennsylvania State University (State College, PA) as a research scientist and project engineer for a special test program in Key West, FL, where he first learned of the gay community. In 1951 he moved to North Hollywood, CA, to work for the Bendix Corporation as a research engineer.

In 1953, Reverend Vincent heard and answered an indisputable call to the ministry and he entered the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) to study for the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. When his superiors continually advised him that he would be a teacher rather than a parish priest (because of his prior educational experience), he became discouraged and returned to lay life in 1956. He returned to Los Angeles and worked as an engineer for Northrup Corporation, RCA, and North American Aviation in the fields of missile systems and computers.

In 1968, Reverend Vincent moved to Grand Prairie, TX, to accept a supervisory position in the engineering department of LTV. On a business trip to Los Angeles in 1970, he visited with Reverend Perry and attended MCC Los Angeles. He was very impressed with what he experienced and was among those present at the first meeting in Dallas which was to become MCC of Dallas. He served as treasurer of the group and, when the group was formally recognized as a study group in the Fall of 1970, he was appointed chairperson of the "Board of Overseers" and ordained a Deacon in MCC by Elder Lou Loynes. When MCC Dallas was chartered in May 1971, Reverend Vincent was elected as the first pastor of that church and served in that capacity until his resignation in September 1974 to be a full time Elder. At the time of his resignation, the Dallas congregation honored him by making him Pastor Emeritus of that church. During the period between January and September of 1974 he was on leave of absence to serve as interim pastor of the struggling mission in New Orleans following the disastrous fire there that had taken the life of the pastor and one third of the congregation. Reverend Vincent's ministry in the Dallas County Jail is still remembered in Texas.

Since his election as an Elder, Reverend Vincent has served as Clerk of the Fellowship. He has been on the Board of Trustees of Samaritan Bible School and on the faculty since 1974 and was appointed President of the school in the Fall of 1975. He has also served on several Fellowship Boards and Commissions, including the Board of Prison Ministry and the Commission on Religious Orders. He is a member of the MCC Exercise in Christian Living team.

Reverend Vincent is the author of *Relationships: An Opinion* and *Letter to a Christian Church* as well as other pamphlets available from the Universal Fellowship Press.

The Reverend Richard R. Mickley, Director of Publications for the Universal Fellowship and Editor of IN UNITY, has also given his time to teach at Samaritan Bible School. Reverend Mickley served several years as a professional Director of Religious Education for large Roman Catholic congregations in Michigan. While coordinating and training a staff of 150 Christian education teachers and eleven paid administrators in adult and school age programs, he authored a book, *Modern Trends in Religious Education.*

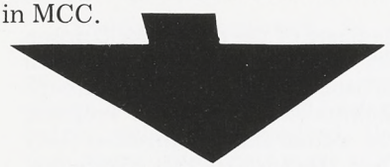
Please turn to page 26

SAN JOSE MCC = Continued

other churches.

The opposition has announced that they will attempt to have the vote of acceptance overturned at the February meeting. In view of the 35-14 original vote and the withdrawal of two opponents, this does not seem likely.

The San Jose *Mercury* has indicated they will do an in depth feature on MCC San Jose. In the meantime, the Christian Community of San Jose is still somewhat divided over who can be considered "Christian." But many good Christians are actively supporting their brothers and sisters in MCC. ■



LATE DEVELOPMENTS: Just as we were going to press, IN UNITY learned in a conversation with Reverend Chapman that emotions are heating up in San Jose. The opposition has strengthened its position to 19, with still 34 in favor of accepting MCC as a member church.

"This is the biggest news in San Jose County these days," said Reverend Chapman. "We are getting thousands of dollars worth of publicity and some new members. But, unfortunately, it is also scaring away some people and taking its toll on me and some of the Board members in terms of emotional strain and extra work." Reverend Chapman is getting repeated requests to speak at member churches.

The February meeting will face a motion to reconsider as the first item on its agenda. ♣

CHIRHO = Continued

projects. Examples are providing the seeing eye dogs, donating a wheelchair to be kept on the church premises, planning and carrying out worship services for a local convalescent home, and working with a home for mentally retarded young adults.

We started in September conducting worship services at Allenvale Convalescent Hospital every other Sunday. We also had a Christmas party for them, contributing some 81 individually wrapped presents. We have a good rapport with not only the elderly people we minister to, but with the hospital staff who welcome us warmly.

Mariposa House has been our newest involvement. It is a home for mentally retarded young adults. We have been working with them, on a Sunday school level. Through donations and contributions, we also furnished them with a Christmas tree. We taught them how to make ornaments, string popcorn, etc. On Christmas Eve, about ten of the ChiRho Group took individual presents to each of the young people, sang Christmas carols, and had a beautiful time.

These are but a few of the ways that ChiRho has involved their "inconvenienced" people. We also have oncea-month speaker meetings. Dr. James Metcalf from Harbor General Hospital spoke to us on epilepsy. Others included a speaker from the Braille Institute and a speech therapist. These speaker meetings are open to everyone. We encourage other groups from the church and the congregation to attend.

ChiRho has also provided many social programs for its members. We have had picnics, pot-luck dinners, and a beautiful Christmas party.

We are proud of our ChiRho Concept and the people involved in it. We feel this is a new approach to an old problem. We would hope that all of our churches would look into the feasibility of implementing this type of handicapped ministry in their churches.

A booklet on the *ChiRho Concept* is in the process of being printed, and will be available soon. This booklet is being published entirely by donations of time and money from the people involved in the ChiRho group. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of this booklet may write to Reverend Joan Johnson at MCC LA, 1050 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, CA 90015. Include two thirteen cent stamps for postage. ■

PERSONAL OPINION = Continued

the development of school community spirit, we trustees are planning orientation sessions and social functions so that new students can be incorporated into the school and student body.

We have found that many of our students were not prepared by their previous schooling for college-level courses (taking adequate notes during lectures, being able to take advantage of a library, doing research, reading commentaries, writing papers, etc.) We are now offering courses in study skills to remedy this.

In our new proposed curriculum I am working for more flexibility so that we can meet the personal needs and abilities of our students: to provide basic courses which would be prerequisite to advanced courses, and to offer challenging courses and independent study to qualified students.

The building of a good library has always been a high priority of Samaritan Bible School. Most of the initial books were donated to the school, and many are dated and not very useful. In recent years, however, the library has acquired many excellent volumes, and money for new books is always included in the budget.

Finally, we have implemented a system of faculty advisers for all students. This is to assist the students with any academic problems, to give counseling and guidance in career preparation, and to hopefully cut down on the high drop-out rate of our students because of academic, personal, or financial reasons.

Samaritan Bible School is well on its way to being a Fellowship-oriented school and a student-oriented school. I hope that all MCC clergy and members will come to appreciate and support the school as I have. I hope that MCC churches and individuals from around the globe will help us to build a top-notch school of which we can all be proud.

Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

THE CELLMATE

January 1976

MCC Choir Sings at Federal Prison

Sunday, November 30th, the thirty voice Gospel Choir of MCC Los Angeles presented a two hour program of gospel music for 150 prisoners at Terminal Island Federal Prison, San Pedro, CA.

The program was arranged by Reverend Joan Johnson of MCC LA through Los Angeles entertainer, Hi-Fi White. Mr. White was MC for the program.

Reverend Bud Bunce and Reverend Dick Mickley attended along with Reverend Johnson. The Board of Institutional Ministry praised Director Jimmy Irving and the choir for their self-sacrificing spirit for this worthy cause. (They sang a two hour morning service, a two hour afternoon program at Terminal Island, and then a two hour evening service at church.)

T.I. News, the prison newspaper, related surprise to hear a choir that was inter-racial, musically diversified and so relaxed. The fourth surprise was "the voices made you a believer!"

The Editor's Note in the *T.I. News* stated, "For those unaware, the Metropolitan Community Church, founded by Reverend Troy Perry, is a world-wide fellowship that believes the love of God is for *everyone*, regardless of race, creed, color or sexual preference. The foregoing article is demonstrative of the open-door policy of this church."

Scott Winans Praises Orlando MCC

"These people here at Orlando sure are great. They have been taking real good care of me."

Scott Winans was happy and exuberant as he called National Administrator Dick Mickley in the prison ministry office.

He was calling from an Orlando, FL, jail to say that Artie Bryan had been visiting him and being a real friend in need. "He even brought me a copy of your book, *Christian Sexuality*," he said, "and it's been a real blessing for me."

Dick and Scott had corresponded for two years while Scott was in federal prison in Indiana. He's back in jail for a minor parole violation, but when he gets out, he's going to be an involved member of MCC Orlando.

"I didn't know there was an MCC here," he said, "I just called information one day, got ahold of MCC, and these people have been visiting me ever since."

"What do you need, Scott?"

"Just prayers ... these people are taking good care of me!"

THE CELLMATE is published monthly by the Board of Institutional Ministry of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, POB 36277, Los Angeles, CA 90036. It is included in IN UNITY, the copyrighted Fellowship news magazine.

Christmas At Monroe State

Members of the Seattle MCC prison ministry, led by Reverend Warren Wagner and Sheldon Haight, through the Monroe Self Awareness Program, held the second annual Christmas party for their friends at the institution.

Homemade cookies were provided by Ida Lewis, entertainment by Melody Jones, Bea Smith, and Cal West. There was dancing. According to the MCC Seattle newsletter, this group is looking forward to entertaining the entire population of the institution.

women behind bars

AN ORGANIZING TOOL

. . . an important new booklet which provides an overview of conditions women face in this country's jails and prisons with an eye toward what can and is being done to bring about fundamental change. Included are over 100 capsule descriptions of groups giving prisoners political support and services, such as legal education projects, bail funds and prisoners' unions. Articles detail the problems of female prisoners, analyse the role of prisons in society, suggest organizing tactics, and outline the legal system of China. There are also sketches of six U.S. women political prisoners and interviews with three ex-cons. Annotated listings describe print and audio-visual resources. 56 pp., $1.75, free to prisoners. Resources for Community Change, PO Box 21066, Washington, DC 20009

Area Representatives

Terry Lee Napier

Terry goes to the institution at Lebanon three times a week and to the work house once a week. He attends weekly meetings at Seven Step Foundation and Chaplain Brown's weekly chapel service. Fridays he spends counseling parolees. Saturdays he spends at the work house, giving Holy Communion and counseling. Terry's pastor, Reverend Bonnie Daniel, of MCC Cincinnati, writes, "Terry works very actively and enthusiastically in prison ministry with much success."

Sheldon Haight

Sheldon is involved in direct ministry to a number of prisoners and ex-prisoners in the Seattle area. He always maintains a high volume of letters written and received. He says that several letters have come as a result of prisoners' seeing his name in the *Cellmate*.

Sheldon, a deacon at MCC Seattle, works with the Reverend Warren Wagner in the Monroe Self-Awareness Program at the Washington State Reformatory.

Steve Childers

Steve reports several visits to jails and prisons in the Dallas area and numerous letters written.

Steve reports the prison ministry and MCC news on a weekly radio program in Dallas.

Recently Steve visited in the Dallas County Jail with a friend of the Reverend Oakler Boston of Los Angeles. Reverend Oakler informed the *Cellmate* that Steve not only took care of the man's immediate needs, but arranged for several other MCC Dallas members to visit him.

Norm Flowers

In Chicago, Norm Flowers maintains an active correspondence with a long list of prisoners throughout the United States.

In addition to his personal letter to numerous prisoners, Norm refers many of his correspondents to his pastor, the Reverend Ken Martin, for pastoral counseling.

Norm, who also holds the job of Coordinator of Prison Ministry in the Great Lakes District, never lets the grass grow under his feet as daily opportunities present themselves to become involved in the needs of prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Rev. Tere Ann Roderick

The women of the Full Moon Coffee House Collective will host a prison ministry conference in San Francisco this Spring in late March or early April. There will be a series of workshops on the needs of women and gay people in prisons. Among those participating in the workshop panels will be Tere speaking about the work of MCC in the prisons.

Reverend Gary Wilson, recently elected District Coordinator of the Northwest District, attended the January 12th service at Vacaville, California Medical Facility. He brought to the prisoners there greetings from their brothers and sisters throughout the District.

At the last District Conference in Sacramento, the District decided to set aside $300 per year for prison ministry. The funds will be divided between the three Area Representatives (appointed as of that time) in the District. These funds will be earmarked for the most part to offset the transportation expenses incurred by these Area Representatives in their prison work.

While there is a soul in prison, I am not free.
—Eugene Debs

PEN PALS WANTED

Michael Stoops, POB 382, Rt. 6, Duluth, MN 55804

Kenneth L. Brown 129422, POB E, Jackson, MI 49204

Richard V. Payne 36396-115, Dorm 4, Box 1500, El Reno, OK 73036

Jerry Reno 5277, 2803 N. Stone St., Spokane, WA 99207

Vernon Childs 136-669, POB 787, Lucasville, OH 45648

Larry Keeling B-63218 CTF-C-C-235, POB 686, Soledad, CA 93960

Michael Panarites CTF-N LB 210, Box B63898, Soledad, CA 93960

The following Area Representatives of the Board of Institutional Ministry (USA) may be contacted for pen pals, parole planning in their area, post release assistance, and questions pertaining to MCC ministry from that area of the United States.

Rev. Bob Arthur, POB 14407, Omaha, NB 68114

Steve Childers, 3834 Ross Av, Dallas, TX 75204

Nick Cupo, POB 8174, Philadelphia, PA 19101

Carl Doerschuk, POB 563, Akron, OH 44309

Arthur Fleschner, 2904 Concordia Av, Tampa, FL 33609

Norm Flowers, POB 2392, Chicago, IL 60690

Rev. Howard Gaass, POB 1145, Baltimore, MD 21203

Rev. Joseph Gilbert, 63 Chapin Av, Providence, RI 02909

Ms. Becky Lema, 2606 N. Wilson Way, Stockton, CA 95205

Sheldon Haight, POB 12020, Seattle, WA 98112

Carol Harris, POB 291, Jacksonville, FL 32201

Steve LaFever, POB 187, Nashville, TN 37202

James Lewey, POB 3147, St. Louis, MO 63130

Terry Napier, POB 39235, Cincinnati, OH 45239

Rev. Jay Neely, POB 1757, New York, NY 10001

Bert Perkins, 11717 Victory Blvd, North Hollywood, CA 91606

Rev. Tere Roderick, 1076 Guerrero St., San Francisco, CA 94110

Ms. Millie Ternosky, POB 9536, Denver, CO 80209

Cliff Turpin, POB 7182, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Fred Wren, POB 5206, Kansas City, MO 64112

Gene Zurenda, POB 228, Escondido, CA 92025

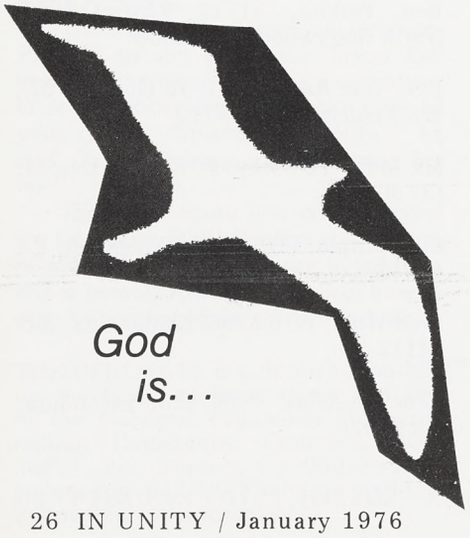
NEW DEAN = Continued

Other experience includes ten years as a teacher of Latin, several years as a chairman in the Ohio Classical Association, three years as a country club manager, two years as assistant director of Pro Football's Hall of Fame at Canton, Ohio, and four years as a part time newspaper reporter. He served as local Jaycee President in his Ohio hometown. He was an alcoholism counselor in Detroit, served as a sergeant in Korea and a lieutenant in the artillery in the reserves.

He was a national leader and author in the Cursillo movement and has worked with a team of ministers and lay people in MCC to introduce that movement into the Universal Fellowship under the name of the Exercise in Christian Community Living.

Reverend Mickley holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the seminary extension of the University of Dayton, Ohio. He did graduate studies in theology at Orchard Lake Center for Pastoral Studies in Michigan, Walsh College, Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, and Nazareth College. He lived for nine years in a Roman Catholic religious order. He did graduate work towards a masters in archeology and classical literature at Kent State University and the American Academy in Rome, Italy. He has studied business management at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

In 1972 Reverend Mickley became a member and exhorter of MCC Detroit and served on the ministerial staffs of Good Shepherd Parish MCC in Chicago and MCC in Phoenix before being named National Administrator of the UFMCC Board of Prison Ministry in 1974, a position he still holds. He is the author of the *Handbook of Prison Ministry*, published in 1974, and *Christian Sexuality*, the first book published by the Universal Fellowship Press.



Faith, Fellowship and Order Commission Announces District Chairpersons

Reverend Howard Wells, Chairperson of the Universal Fellowship of MCC Commission on Faith, Fellowship, and Order, has announced District FFO Commission Chairpersons for all U.S. Districts. Non-U.S. appointments are pending.

Southeast District: Mr. John Ayers (Tampa)

Great Lakes District: Reverend Nancy Wilson (Detroit)

Mid-Central District: Ms. Karen Linstrom (St. Louis)

South Central District: Reverend Joel Kauhl (New Orleans)

Southwest District: Reverend Valerie Valrejean (Los Angeles)

Northwest District: Mr. Herm Mank (San Francisco)

Northeast District: Ms. "Dee" Jackson (New York) and Mr. George Dube (Brooklyn)

The responsibilities of these chairpersons revolve around organizing district level commissions on Faith, Fellowship and Order, and conducting district level workshops based on the following Six Questions assigned to the Commission by the 1974 General Conference.

1. What is theology? How does it relate to the Christ story?
2. What is the theological task of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches?
3. How do we define the community to which we are called to minister?
4. How might we focus or bring to bear the Christian gospel on the needs of the community we have defined?
5. How might we reflect or manifest that focusing task in our worship?
6. What is/are the basis/es of uniqueness that characterizes the Christian ministry of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches?

The Commission is charged with presenting a paper on the six questions at the 1976 General Conference.

The goals of the Commission for 1975-76 are:

1. To prepare a response to the six questions and present it to the General Conference in 1976;
2. To lay the foundations for district-wide Commissions in order to be better able to: a) Educate congregations as to the function of the Commission, and b) Provide a means to elicit congregational and individual input and response to the Commission's task;
3. To establish credibility for the Commission as a body that effectively addresses itself to the theological needs of the Fellowship.

The Commission on Faith, Fellowship and Order was formed two years ago for the purpose of providing an organizational structure that is geared to address itself to questions on faith, theology and Biblical interpretation as these pertain to the ministry of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Chruches.

The first chairperson of the Commission was the Reverend Elder James E. Sandmire. At the 1975 General Conference, the Reverend Howard R. Wells was appointed by the Board of Elders to assume the responsibilities of chairperson. The Reverend Valerie Valrejean was appointed vice-chairperson.

Elder Sandmire will function as the liaison between the Commission and the Board of Elders. At present, the Commission's makeup is being reconstituted in order to insure a well-represented, ecumenical membership. ■

Marine Sergeant Fights for Right to Attend MCC

Staff Seageant Robert LeBlanc has won a temporary stay in the efforts of the Marine Corps to discharge him for "homosexual tendancies." He filed a federal lawsuit against the Marine Corps insisting that the charges against him violate his privacy.

Twice in the past, Sgt. LeBlanc has been cleared of charges that he is a homosexual.

The plea for a restraining order was made on December 22, the day the Commandant of the Marine Corps had ordered his General discharge as an "undesirable."

A twelve year veteran with twelve battle ribbons earned in two tours of duty in Viet Nam, the thirty year old Marine says, "It's none of their business where I go to church, or what my sexual orientation is. The serviceman is in the armed forces to protect the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. I think it is wrong if the very person who protects the freedom of all Americans is denied these rights for himself. I have a right to hear Troy Perry preach, to be a member or a deacon of MCC, and even go to gay bars. I don't think they have a right to ask me if I'm a homosexual — or a heterosexual. They have asked me many times if I'm a homosexual. My answer is that it's nobody's business but my own. The military is one of the few organizations in our country which claims the right to invade a person's privacy by asking about private preferences."

In contrast with former Air Force Sergeant Leonard Matlovich, who was discharged from the military as a self-avowed homosexual, Sgt. LeBlanc is maintaining his right to remain in the Marine Corps whatever his sexual preference may be — and he's not revealing that information.

Some weeks ago, LeBlanc, a military policeman stationed at Long Beach, California, was followed to MCC Los Angeles by military investigators and later questioned about it at the base.

The first time the Marine Corps failed to prove LeBlanc to be homosexual was in 1969 when they gave him three lie detector tests which did not substantiate the charges of Naval Intelligence people at Quantico, VA.

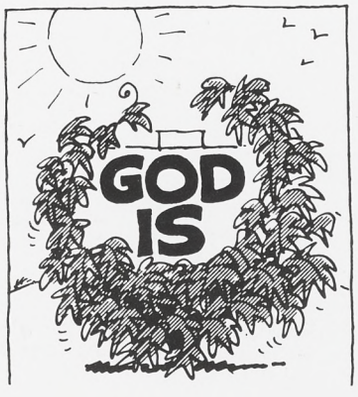
In his federal lawsuit Sgt. LeBlanc is upholding his right to be a U.S. Marine, a member of MCC, go to gay bars, if he chooses, all on the grounds that it is unconstitutional and a violation of his basic rights for the military to inquire about the sex preference of military personnel.

The Secretary of the Navy, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and LeBlanc's Commanding Officer have been subpoenaed to testify in the federal court case. Initial action is expected in January or February.

Sgt. LeBlanc has served as USMC military police chief for the Los Angeles area and has worked as an undercover agent in the investigation of drug abuses.

Sgt. LeBlanc is represented by Attorney Scott J. Tepper, a graduate of Harvard Law School, who specializes in representing military personnel with claims against the military. Before opening his Los Angeles office five years ago, Attorney Tepper was Director of the Committee for Military Justice at Harvard Law School.

For the time being, the official position of the Commandant of the Marine Corps is that Sgt. LeBlanc is to be discharged as an undesirable, but that action is delayed pending outcome of the federal suit initiated by Sergeant LeBlanc. In the meantime, Sgt. LeBlanc is a familiar figure at MCC Los Angeles and MCC Long Beach. ✱



ACLU Takes Sullivan Case

Tony Sullivan and Richard Adams have been notified that the American Civil Liberties Union will fight the deportation of Tony, an Australian, whose marriage to Richard has been widely publicized in the U.S. press. (cf. IN UNITY, December 1975.)

On December 2nd, the United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service in Los Angeles rescinded the decision that Tony could not be considered Richard's spouse for the reason that they had "failed to prove that a bona fide marital relationship can exist between two faggots."

The December 2nd decision withdrew the November 24th decision stating that it had been grounded on a legally insufficient basis. Then it continued:

"A marriage between two males is invalid for immigration purposes and cannot be considered a bona fide marital relationship since neither party to the marriage can perform the female functions in marriage. Black's Law Dictionary defines marriage as, 'the civil status, condition or relation of one man and one woman united in law for life, for the discharge to each other and the community of the duties legally incumbent upon those whose association is founded on the distinction of sex.'

"Even if there is no prohibition to the issuance of a license to and a marriage between two persons of the same sex in the state where the marriage is performed, the fact remains that a marriage is and always has been a contract between a man and a woman. A union between two males does not create a marriage contract.

"One of the parties to this union may function as a female in other relationships and situations, but cannot function as a wife by assuming female duties and obligations inherent in the marital relationship. A union of this sort was never intended by Congress to form a basis of a visa petition." ✱

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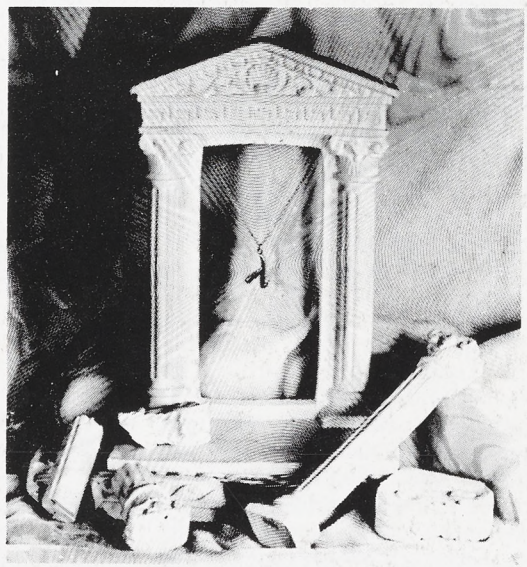

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